

D: W B. G. St.
Oct. 175.

W O M E N;

OR,

POUR ET CONTRE.



THE AUTHOR OF "BERTRAM," &c.

" 'Tis good to be merry and wise,
'Tis good to be honest and true ;
'Tis good to be off with the old love
Before you be on with the new."

Scotch Ballad.

By Charles K. *Hurst* Motterine.
IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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P R E F A C E.

NONE of my former prose works have been popular. The strongest proof of which is, none of them arrived at a second edition ; nor could I dispose of the copyright of any but of the " Milesian," which was sold to Mr Colburn for 80% in the year 1811.

" Montorio" (misnomed by the bookseller " The Fatal Revenge," a very book-selling appellation) had some share of popularity, but it was only the popularity of circulating libraries : it deserved no better ; the

date of that style of writing was out when I was a boy, and I had not powers to revive it. When I look over those books now, I am not at all surprised at their failure; for, independent of their want of *external* interest, (the strongest interest that books can have, even in this reading age,) they seem to me to want *reality*, *vraisemblance*; the characters, situations, and language, are drawn merely from imagination; my limited acquaintance with life denied me any other resource. In the Tale which I now offer to the public, perhaps there may be recognised some characters which experience will not disown. Some resemblance to common life may be traced in them. On this I rest for the most part the interest of the narrative. The paucity of characters and incidents (the absence of all that constitutes the interest of fictitious biography in general) excludes

the hope of this work possessing any other interest.

If this plain avowal of the want of effect in my former attempts does not mitigate the severity of critical animadversion, I have one more plea to offer, which I hope may prove not ineffectual, that it is the *last time* I ever shall trespass in *this way* on the indulgence of the public. One more attempt I shall make, and then address my "*valet*" to the audience, with little hope of being able to add, "*plaudite*."

TO
THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
THE
COUNTESS OF ESSEX.

MADAM,

PERMIT me to express my gratitude for the honour you have conferred on me, in allowing me to dedicate this " Tale" to your Ladyship.

I could wish that its merits had rendered it more worthy of such a distinction ; but the highest it can possess is derived from that condescension which enables me to grace it with the name of the Countess of Essex.

I have the honour to be,

MADAM,

*Your Ladyship's grateful and
Obedient Servant,*

THE AUTHOR.

WOMEN;

OR,

POUR ET CONTRE.

CHAPTER I.

Ut mea sit, servata mea virtute, paciscor.

OVID.

CHARLES DE COURCY, the orphan heir to a respectable property in the south of Ireland, after having received a more than usually good education, in the house of a clerical gentleman, who was also one of his guardians, entered the university of Dublin, in November 1813, when he was about seventeen years of age.

What he was, or rather what his tutor thought he was, may be judged from a let-

ter written by that gentleman to the other guardian, a few days after his ward and pupil had quitted him.

After sundry details (which may be spared the reader,) concerning the settlement of accounts, and arrangements for De Courcy's living in college, the letter proceeded thus :—

“ I have now resigned my charge, but the interest I have always felt for him has been only increased by our separation. He has entered on the stage of life, and, qualified to sustain any part, even the first, I tremble to think that he may fall even to the lowest—‘ unstable as water, he may not excel.’—Nature and fortune seem to have done every thing for him—but what may he do with himself?—or rather, what may not *others* do with him?—almost what they please. The materials are inestimable, but they may be moulded either into a god, or a *terminus—incertus scamnum faceretne, ane—maluit esse Deum*—Generous, affec-

tionate, brave, with sensibility that every thing touches, genius that every thing inspires, cheerfulness that every thing can animate, simplicity that any thing can impose on. Such is the picture, but all pictures must have a reverse ;—credulous, fluctuating, and irresolute, ever led by the last speaker,—ever obeying the fresh impulse,—false shame always suffered to act in the place of true,—the heart always consulted in disdain of the understanding,—the censure of the world dreaded less than its laugh,—and the reproaches of the heart coming too late for any thing but to increase his sufferings ;—such is DeCourcy.—Such is he ! How can I tell at this moment what he is ?—who can analyze to its original tint that which varies with every light and shade that wanders over its surface ? Among intellectual men, he is all sparkling intelligence, and honourable ambition ; among different characters, loudest of the loud, and lightest of the light ; if seen in *his own light*, in his

natural character, abstracted from all external influence, the most amiable, affectionate, and unpretending of human beings. The mock-bird, you know, though said to derive his distinction from imitating the tones of others, is found by later naturalists to possess some notes of his own exquisitely sweet.

* * * * *

“ There are but two things that can *fix* his character. The steady pursuit of literary eminence, for which he has enough of ambition, and more than enough of talent—or—(and far may that period be from him,) passion, to which I fear he will not long be a stranger. If he loves, love will fix his destiny, and perhaps fatally for himself; in every thing else, he may be *like the Eolian harp, answering in melody to every breeze that sweeps it*. But in this the master-chord will be heard, and the hand that touches it will unite every string in harmony, or break them. I will say no

more ; he has had my efforts, my admonitions, my wishes, even my prayers. They will still be his ; never did a being emerging into life give greater cause of hope and of fear. He may be any thing—he may be nothing—or worse than nothing.

“ EVERARD ASGILL.”

* * * * *

While Mr Asgill was writing, De Courcy was on his way to Dublin. A singular circumstance attended his journey. The coach in which he travelled broke down in passing through the town of Lucan ; none of the passengers were hurt, but the coach was so shattered that it was impossible to proceed in it. This was about four o'clock of a November evening ; the rest of the passengers chose to remain at Lucan, but Charles, learning it was not quite five miles to Dublin, determined to walk on. The evening was mild, and even beautiful ; there was no moon, but the stars were already

beginning to twinkle brightly. We often have in Ireland winter nights that rival the beauty and softness of a summer one. It was past seven when he reached the outskirts of Dublin, and mistaking a direction given him at the entrance of Barrack-street, he crossed into the north-circular road, and, with the murmur and the lights of the city still before him, and appearing almost round him, he reached the Canal Bridge. He was alone ; as he crossed it, he was startled by the cries of a female voice, piercing, but suddenly stopped ;—he rushed forward,—a carriage thundering over the bridge passed him rapidly, and in a few moments the rolling of the wheels at a distance, as it pursued the way to the country, was the only sound to be heard.

There was not a passenger on the road ; he stood for some moments uncertain what to do ; courage was natural to him, but as yet he had had no opportunity to exercise it. There was no other passenger on the

road ; and it was therefore certain, that the sounds of distress he heard must have proceeded from the carriage ; he hurried after it. At the turnpike there was a short delay ; but while it continued, the same cries, now evidently, though faintly, issuing from the carriage, struck on his ear. He redoubled his speed, hoping to be able to stop it at the turnpike ; but the carriage went rapidly on, and the people at the gate, of whom he enquired, could only tell him that a gentleman within had given them a handful of silver in great haste ; that there was a kind of struggle within ; and that he had ordered the driver to go on at full gallop. De Courcy, hopeless of overtaking them, still pursued, when one of the horses, pushed beyond his speed, fell, and remaining entangled in the harness, by his utmost efforts he came up with them before they reached the gate of the Phoenix Park. The driver, and an out-rider, who had dismounted, were busy about the horse that

had fallen, and a man leaning out of the window was cursing their delay, when a female voice screamed audibly within, and De Courcy could distinctly see an arm extended from the window that was instantly and forcibly withdrawn, and the man in the carriage drew up the window, urging, with frightful imprecations, the driver to proceed. De Courcy attempted to force open the door, which was strongly held within; the driver, turning round, aimed a blow at him with the end of his whip, which was meant to stun him; De Courcy shunned it, closed with him, wrested it from him, and again attempted the door; but the man, in the mean time, was on his box, and the out-rider lashing on the horses with his own whip, they set off at full speed, though the plunging, halting gait of one of them indicated he had been lamed by his fall.

The carriage entered the Park. Charles hurried to the centinel at the gate, and ac-

quainted him with the facts, and with his fears, on which he laid much stronger stress. The centinel could not quit his post, but offered to alarm the guard. Charles then alone, entered on the Park road, utterly ignorant of its direction, and with nothing to guide him but the lessening sound of the carriage now rolling at a hopeless distance before him. So ignorant was he of the environs of Dublin; that he made his way out of the other Park-gate, and was on the Chapelizod road before he knew he had quitted it; then, about half a mile onward, a light, seen distinctly across the dark road, directed him to a cabin door, where a woman stood evidently looking, or trying to look, after some object she had lately seen.

“ Did a carriage pass this way lately ?” said De Courcy.

The woman answered there had ; that it had stopped near her door in consequence of some accident that had happened to one

of the horses which appeared to be lame ; that her son had been called out to assist in settling the harness ; and she added, that a *gentleman* in the carriage had rewarded her so liberally, that “ she did not know what to make of it ; ” and that he seemed so agitated, that, after giving her the money, he still continued to hold her hand with such force (all the time calling to the driver to hurry on) that she was dragged for some steps along with the carriage before he recollected himself, and released her.

De Courcy scarce waited to hear her ; and, though now without hope or even object, and with strength nearly exhausted, once more hurried on to pursue he knew not what.

The darkness of the moonless night, and the speed with which he had walked (the utmost speed of a frame eminently active) had prevented his discovering, or even thinking, where he was ; but at this moment the loud bell of the Royal Hospital

striking nine, and its sound instantly repeated by those of Stephens and Swift in solemn accordance, reminded him that he must have wandered in a circuit, as he was still so near to Dublin. The sound, augmented by the dead stillness of the night, seemed to him the most awful he had ever heard, and at that moment a striking passage in Clarkson's Account of the Abolition of the Slave-Trade rushed on his memory; it was that in which he describes the effect of the bells of the city of Bristol ringing out as he approached it—approached it with a purpose so hostile to its wealth, its power, and its crime; he describes its effect like that of an awful challenge to his spirit, a summons to a conflict, of which he had never fully felt the magnitude or weight before.

De Courcy listened till the last sound died away; and, pausing to catch its echo, saw a gleam of light appear and vanish near him, and he turned in the direction, and

saw a woman with a light in her hand enter a house at a short distance—He followed her—the door was instantly shut—he knocked at it—no answer—the light within disappeared. His feelings were alive to every suspicion at this moment ; and, unable to consult any thing but his feelings, he obeyed them with a kind of blind confidence. He knocked again ; and, receiving no answer, burst the door open in a moment ; a cry, fearfully smothered, and quick short breathing near him instantly followed, and he felt that either he or the inhabitants of the place had something to fear from each other. All was dark at first ; but in a few seconds there came a gloomy indistinct glare from the turf-embers that burned on the hearth, that still shewed nothing but the earthen floor and the rafted roof, leaving the walls in complete obscurity. No human creature was to be seen—Charles paused—the deep stifled breathing increased—at last, a voice near him, the

speaker still unseen, whispered, "Is that the *min*?"

Charles, who knew not what to answer, advanced; a woman then started forward from a dark corner, and stood wildly before him, as if wishing to oppose him, she knew not how. She was a frightful and almost supernatural object; her figure was low, and she was evidently very old, but her muscular strength and activity were so great, that, combined with the fantastic wildness of her motions, it gave them the appearance of the gambols of a hideous fairy. She was in rags, yet their arrangement had something of a picturesque effect. Her short tattered petticoats, of all colours, and of various lengths, depending in angular shreds, her red cloak hanging on her back, and displaying her bare bony arms, with hands whose veins were like ropes, and fingers like talons; her naked feet, with which, when she moved, she stamped, jumped, and beat the earth like.

an Indian squaw in a war-dance ; her face *tattooed* with the deepest indentings of time, want, wretchedness, and evil passions ; her wrinkles, that looked like channels of streams long flowed away ; the eager motion with which she shook back her long matted hair, that looked like strings of the grey bark of the ash tree, while eyes flashed through them whose light seemed the posthumous offspring of deceased humanity,—her whole appearance, gestures, voice, and dress, made De Courcy's blood run cold within him. They gazed on each other for some time, as if trying to make out each other's purpose, from faces dimly seen, till the woman, whose features seemed kindling by the red light into a fiend-like glare, appeared to discover that he was not the person whom she expected, and cried, in a voice at once shrill and hollow, like a spent blast, " What is it brought you here ?"—and before he could answer, rushing forward, stood with her back against

a door, (which but for this motion he would not have observed,) and waving her lean nervous arms, exclaimed fiercely,—“Come no farther, at your peril.”

This attitude and tone of defiance roused De Courcy,—“At my peril, then,” said he; but he recollected that he had to contend with a woman, and attempted gently, but firmly, to remove her from the door. This he found no easy task; the beldame grappled with the strength of a fury, and it was only by his utmost exertions that he succeeded in tearing her from it. A faint murmur within, as if proceeding from some one disturbed by the noise of the struggle, reached his ear as at length he flung the door open. A wretched candle threw its dim light (too dim to be discovered before) on a pallet and a figure in white that lay extended on it. The spotless white of the drapery made a strange contrast to the darkness, filth, and misery around it. De Courcy approached;—it was a female; the face was

averted, and one arm was flung wildly over the head, but ringlets of luxuriant dishevelled hair, that even in the darkness gleamed like gold, were scattered over the shoulder, descending almost to the slender waist, and half the pale cheek, lovely even in apparent death, was seen beneath it. A gush of pity, horror, and indignation, swelled in De Courcy's throat ;—he could not speak—he could not approach—he leaned for support against the wretched bed on which she lay unconsciously. She was young,—how young and how lovely that lovely hair and slender milky arm told him as he hung over her. What she must have suffered to be there—what might she not have suffered since she came or had been dragged there ! Her present insensibility seemed manifestly the stupor of illness or terror. He spoke to her, though he scarce knew what he said, but she gave no answer. He attempted, as he thought, to raise her, but his touch was too feeble to

have raised a far lighter weight, though he felt that even his touch was something like profanation. She fell like a corpse from his arms, but as she fell, a few indistinct reluctant sounds announced, that though life was apparently suspended, it was not extinguished.

At this moment the hag approached the door, and stood without entering, bending backwards and forwards, like a tigress collecting force for a spring. De Courcy looked at her for a moment; there was nothing human or hopeful about her; but the dread that she might have assistants near, made him risk an appeal even to her. He caught her arm and attempted to lead her towards the sufferer; she struggled to get loose from him, fearing, like all who intend an injury, that some was intended to her. He released her, and with an appealing look pointed to the bed. The woman hesitated, and De Courcy, thinking he knew the cause of her hesitation, promised

her secrecy and an ample reward, if she assisted him in removing the lady, or even in not obstructing their escape. Her wild, but meaning eye, was strongly fixed on him while he spoke, and she burst into a laugh of frantic derision, in whose "madness, however, there was meaning."

"And you would give money for her soul, would you? and for my soul, too?—you would; but I am no Judas. I won't sell her for your thirty pieces of silver. I have watched for her, I have sought her, I have bought her. I watched in day and in darkness. I waded through tears and blood for her;—she is mine. Do not touch her;—she is bought with the price that you can never pay. Oh! they were weary hours till I paid her price. I paid it on the mountain—I paid it on the bog—I paid it on the road when I begged—in their dark holes, where they kept me screeching, and told me I was mad—in their prisons, where they kept me starving

and said I was a vagabond. Vagabond and mad as I was, I won her from them all, and I'll keep her ;—I was weak, but God was strong. I had that glory from God to laugh at them and tread on them ; tread on life and death to save her ;—and I have saved her through the power of the Cross, and the power of the Holy Mary, and of all the blessed holy saints.—*Ora pro nobis, Sancta Maria.*—*Ora pro nobis, sancte diabolus.* No, no,—that was the tempter's doing ;—he takes the words out of my mouth, and the grace out of my heart, and there he stands grinning and mocking—*a-page satana—ora pro nobis Domine Jesu*—that's it, that's it—that's the word. I wanted it, but Satan sent it far away. Let me kiss the Cross—ha, ha, ha ! Why do you offer that great black claw ?—ha, ha, ha !—that's the tempter.”

In an agony of supernatural excitement, she flung herself on her knees, and inarticulately repeated some Latin prayers, mix-

ed with the frequent use of the sign of the Cross. If the state of De Courcy's feelings could have allowed him to glance at any object but that he was trying ineffectually to raise and support, the figure before him must have fixed his whole attention. She was kneeling, indeed ; but her expression and attitude denoted execration, not prayer. She seemed to be uttering those " blessings of the evil genii which are curses ;" her very rags seemed to quiver and rise on her body from the intensity of her feelings ; her grey matted hairs actually did, as in the eagerness of her motions the red handkerchief that bound them fell off, and showed them in all their deformity of streaming hoariness ;—her luminous dilated eyes rolled rapidly and obliquely in their sockets, as if in search of certain objects concealed from human sight ; and the quick motion of her white shrivelled lips seemed to mutter a spell, not an address to Heaven.

De Courcy looked on her for a moment with horror, and then conceiving that this paroxysm, in which she seemed unconscious of her own existence, might be favourable to the escape of the prisoner, raised her light weight in his arms in one moment, and bore her out of the room. The hag sprung from her knees and caught hold of the young female ; till that moment the latter had not shewed the least sensibility, but at that touch she seemed to revive with a kind of abhorrent instinct, clung to De Courcy with all her strength, and hid her face in his bosom. Her clasp, though twined round him in unconscious and convulsive horror, seemed to send fire through all his veins. He broke from the grasp of the woman, and rushed from the hovel. The woman followed and seized his hand, which he could not release for some minutes ; her preceding strength had been evidently that of frenzy, and was now gradually relaxing ; yet still she held his hand, and poring over

it with a witchlike eagerness, exclaimed, as she examined its lines,—“ Ay, ay, it is white and soft—white enough, yet there is black in every line of it to the eyes that can see it, the blackness that is blacker than death. It is as soft as a woman's, and yet it can deal a heavy blow—the blow that kills what it never touched—the blow that breaks the heart. Others are deadly to them they hate, but you will be deadly to them you love!—Take her, take her from me if you will, but take my curse with you ; it will be heavier on your heart than her weight is on your arm. I never cursed the grass but it withered, or the sky but it grew dark, or the living creatures but they pined and wasted away. Now you bear her away like a corpse in your arms, and I see you following her corpse to the church-yard, and the white ribbons tying her shroud ; her maiden name on her tomb-stone ; no child to cry for her, and you that sent her to her grave wishing it was dug for you.”

She continued her maledictions with such frightful loudness and vehemence, that De Courcy still heard and shuddered at them, though now he was at a considerable distance from the hovel. The road which he took (scarce knowing where to go) lay between the Park wall and the river. The low fields on the banks of the Liffey, with their hedges level to the road, and their flat expanse giving no shelter, left him no hope of escape if they were pursued. A carriage came on rapidly behind him, and contrasting the appearance and dress of the young female (whom he still bore in his arms,) with the wretched state of the hovel where he had found her, and of the woman in whose power she was, he immediately conceived that other hands must have placed her there, and that he might have to contend with more than the frantic witch-like being, whose curses still rung in his ears, before he could save her.

They were now, however, near Dublin,

and he recollected that the lodge at the Park-gate might afford them shelter before they reached it. The swift approach of the carriage, and several voices, as of men accompanying it, all engaged in enquiry, and rapidly exchanging oaths and reproaches among each other, convinced him that some danger was near, from which he had no means of protecting his helpless burthen. He retreated, and tried to conceal himself and her among the thick bushes that cluster below the Park wall; he sunk on his knees, and withheld his very breath. The carriage came on, stopped, and the lights of lanterns glanced across the road. Several voices eagerly enquired, "Where she was?" and among them that of the old woman was heard; but she spoke in Irish, and De Courcy could only collect some imprecations familiar to the ears of all who have heard the lower orders in Ireland speak.

All this went on within ten yards of

where De Courcy lay concealed ; yet this moment of terror and danger was the most delicious of his existence ; for the young female at this moment, revived by the air or by the motion, clasped her white arms closer round him, and murmured some inarticulate sounds. It was the first proof of existence she had given, yet De Courcy trembled lest the sound of her voice, faint as it was, might reach the ears of those whom he dreaded to be her pursuers ; and, with hands almost convulsed with the effort, he dared to press her closer to his bosom, to hush the whisper that she breathed. There was a dead silence on the road ; the lights continued there, and their red glare fell strongly on the very bushes where De Courcy lay concealed. A short consultation was held (which seemed to him to last for ever ;)—then the far-off rolling of the carriage-wheels, and the parting light, as it sunk in the distance, announced all was safe. The woman loitered some time af-

ter the rest, and with the inconsistency of madness, was singing a fragment of an Irish ballad, evidently of monkish composition, and of which the air has all the monotonous melancholy of the chaunt of the cloister :—

“ Oh I wish you were along with me,
Said the *false knight*, as he rode ;
And our *Lord in company*,
Said the child, and he stood.”

“ Where’s the next ?” she muttered ; “ ay—gone far off, like all I remembered once—far off.

“ Oh, I wish you were in yonder well,
Said the *false knight*, as he rode ;
And you in the pit of hell,
Said the child, and he stood.”

And her voice died away in indistinct mutterings.

De Courcy did not lose a moment now ; the light burthen in his arms felt like a

feather, and it was scarce possible for human foot to traverse the ground with the rapidity of his, till he reached the lodge at the Park-gate. She neither moved nor breathed, and at times he doubted fearfully whether it was the strong pulsation of his own heart he mistook for her's, or whether her's was throbbing with life. It was some time before he could rouse the people, and when he did, their astonishment at seeing a stranger, supporting in his arms an insensible female, of whom he could give no account, and of whose very name he was ignorant, prevented them at first from applying the means for her recovery ; they stared on him and each other in stupid amazement.

De Courcy entreated one of them to hasten to Dublin for any conveyance that could be procured, and, placing her on a seat, knelt before her. Her cold extended hands, closed eyes, white lips, and rigid frame, filled him, as he gazed, with un-

speaking horror. Water was the only restorative the people had to offer; but they made their turf-fire blaze in a moment, and when by its light they saw the beautiful and innocent creature that lay apparently lifeless before them, a cry of pity and horror burst from them all, and they eagerly employed themselves in every means for her recovery that well-meaning ignorance could suggest. Simple as these means were, they proved effectual, and De Courcy at last beheld the colour of life tinging her cheek, with a hue as faint as that in the bell of a hyacinth. As returning animation slowly pervaded her frame, De Courcy gazed, and thought that its like had never before been beheld on earth. She seemed scarce beyond the age of childhood, and there appeared about her an ethereal lightness and purity, a visible sanctity, that even in that helpless state made her appear as scarce

“Of the earth—earthly.”

Her eyes opened slowly, and wandered for some time without discrimination on the objects round her ; but the kneeling figure of De Courcy, his locked hands, and his speaking eyes, soon pointed out her preserver among the group.

Certainly man never appears to woman under so interesting an aspect as that of her protector ; even the roughest form and manners do not repel the most delicate woman, when associated with this idea ; but when it is accompanied by a form whose beauty and tenderness (like De Courcy's) are almost feminine, the contrast of such qualities augments their value, and one feels for such an object almost all that could be inspired by both sexes in each other. With a feeling, that even the novelty of her situation could not repel, she spread out her white hands to him, and exclaimed, " Oh ! how much, how much do I owe you ! "

De Courcy heard with that silent delight that cannot answer ; he bowed to the

earth before her, and pressing his lips to the edge of her white garment, felt a relief in sinking from her sight, and shutting out the intoxicating sound of her voice. Exhausted by the effort, the young female fell back, and closing her eyes and reclining her head, seemed to sink into a state between repose and insensibility.

Suddenly the sound of a carriage was heard ; the party held their breath in terror ; the woman dexterously extinguished the light ; there was a dead silence for some moments ; at last the welcome voice of the messenger from Dublin was heard. The door was opened immediately, and an elderly man, of no very prepossessing appearance, entered, and addressed the lady as his niece. She was for some time unable to answer him, and he turned to the people of the lodge for explanation ; but they could give him none. There was something very singular in his manner, which struck De Courcy, agitated as he

was ; he neither expressed terror, pity, wonder, or affection, but he was profuse in his acknowledgments to the Deity, and these were delivered in a measured and technical phrase, which seemed to be ready prepared in his memory, and to cost him little effort to repeat. Of De Courcy he took no notice, and De Courcy felt no wish to obtrude himself on it. It was only when he was supporting his niece to the carriage, that she turned round, and pointing to De Courcy, with a gesture whose emphasis could not be mistaken, forced the attention of her uncle towards him. ¹

There was an eloquent reproach in her appealing look, that roused him reluctantly. He turned to De Courcy, and muttered some ungracious sounds of obligation, concluding by offering him a seat in the carriage to Dublin. De Courcy bowed proudly, and felt disposed to decline his offer ; but acute and increasing pain in his head and back, which he then ascribed to

fatigue, compelled him to accept the repulsive invitation. When they were in the carriage, the uncle (whose name he had neither heard or enquired,) informed him he had been in search of his niece, whose *disappearance at evening prayers* had alarmed the family, when he had *providentially* met in the street the young man who had been sent to Dublin for the carriage. From a conversation he overheard between him and the coachman, he suspected the truth, and, accompanying him down, discovered his niece. To this explanation De Courcy listened with little interest; his pains were becoming excruciating, accompanied with a violent pulsation in his temples; the niece never spoke, though frequently called on by her uncle to "*lift up her voice and praise the Lord for her deliverance.*"

The carriage stopt in a street, of which De Courcy did not know the name or direction; the sullen, half-muttered expression of a wish to see him at their abode, to

“join in thanksgiving for the mercy of which he had been the instrument,” he hardly heard, and hurried to the hotel where he was to pass the night in a state of feverish suffering, which his mental agitation was momentarily exasperating.

In the morning he was delirious: the seeds of a fever had been lurking in his constitution, and now burst forth with violence. Of many young men whom he had known in the country, and who had professed to look forward with such delight to the renewal of their intercourse in Dublin, not one approached his sick bed; and, in spite of medical skill, he might have perished from the want of those numberless nameless attentions, more needful to sickness than medicine itself, had it not been for the care of a young man, who, till then, had never professed any particular friendship for De Courcy.

His name was Montgomery; a serious young man, whom his acquaintance ridi-

culed as a Methodist : he took his patient steady station beside De Courcy's infected bed, and never quitted it till the sufferer was restored to every thing but strength. It was a singular circumstance, that, on his recovery, he found that the delirium of his fever had obliterated every trace of that eventful night, except the image of the young female. Of the place where he found her, her name, her residence, he could not recal a single idea ; while of her form, her face, her motion, and the few words she had murmured, he retained an impression so vivid and distinct, that it tormented him with its contrasted clearness. His confused and clouded memory seemed to darken the back-ground of the painting, to make every line and tint of its beautiful subject shine out with the brightness of reality. For hours he thought upon that night, vainly trying to grasp one accompanying idea. Sometimes in despair he gave up the whole as a vision, and often he felt as if she was

still in his arms. He had never mentioned the circumstance to any one ; and his involuntary doubts of its reality were strengthened by the silence of *the other party*. Neither uncle, or niece, (if such persons existed,) had ever made an enquiry about him.

“ Singular neglect, if it was not all a dream !” said De Courcy to himself.

CHAPTER II.

Te captam somniis teneo.

THIS constant uneasy contemplation retarded his recovery. In the evenings he was particularly lonely and depressed; and one evening in particular saw Montgomery going to leave him with a reluctance which he was ashamed to avow.

“Where are you going, Montgomery?”

“To Bethesda Chapel, to the evening lecture.”

“They say you are a Methodist,” said De Courcy, laughing.

“If I minded what fools said of me, I should have a fine time of it,” said Montgomery, bluntly.

“Take me with you, provided always you do not convert me,” said De Courcy,

hiding his unwillingness to be alone under a forced laugh.

“ If God does not convert you, man never can,” said Montgomery. So they went both of them together.

Bethesda Chapel was crowded ; the pressure in the aisle soon separated De Courcy and Montgomery ; and the former continued standing till he was almost exhausted. An elderly lady, towards the close of the sermon, opened a pew-door, and, by a courteous motion, invited him to enter ; his figure and appearance, unlike any in the place, had struck her ; and when she saw him often remove the thick hair from his pale forehead, on which the drops of weakness were every moment bursting out, she felt affected by this contrast of youth, gigantic height, and apparent debility. He accepted her offer ; but still continued to stand in fixed attention to the preacher, and this circumstance pleased the old lady. She turned her eyes often towards him, and

wished him well. The sermon ended ; and the hymn, in which many of the congregation joined, began.

Close to De Courcy, the tones of a voice more soft, more rich, more plaintive, and more pure, than it seemed possible for human organs to utter, " rose like a stream of rich distilled perfumes." Ignorant of music as a science, but " tremblingly alive" to its influence, he listened ;—the voice, strengthening with the joining voices of the congregation, and aided by the swell of the organ, sounded so distinctly, that De Courcy, starting, for the first time perceived a young female standing beside him, whose simple dress, low stature, and slight figure, had hitherto escaped his observation. Her face was completely concealed by her large bonnet, and her figure lost in a dark pelisse, and her whole appearance was so petite and obscure, that De Courcy bent to listen whether those delicious sounds were indeed uttered by her.

As he leaned near her, the young female, with that liberty which seems to inspire confidence, but not to express it, offered him her hymn-book, and pointing with her white finger to the page, pursued her sacred song with as little emotion as if her sister held the other leaf. De Courcy bent over the book, which was so small that their hands almost touched each other; his eyes, fixed on the white fairy fingers so near, wandered over the lines without distinguishing them;—that thrilling voice so close to him, those tones that seemed to turn the very air into music, gave him sensations of delight, such as Milton felt when he said, "*Intremuit læto florea terra sono.*" He did not wish for some moments to catch a glimpse of her face—he felt as if the present moment were to last for ever—as if the sounds which he then heard were never to cease. It was only at the conclusion of the hymn (when the lady attempting to withdraw the book, which he still

held unconsciously, looked up with a slight expression of surprise) that he beheld a countenance which gleamed on him like a vision of the past. The ringlets of pale gold, curling like the untortured locks of childhood, falling over her cheek, like the shade of brilliant foliage over a bed of blossoms ; the eyes of Heaven's own blue, in which every feeling of the pure heart was written, and not a feeling that might not be avowed to men and angels ; the lips, over whose young roses no breath but of devotion had ever sighed ; her whole aspect reflecting the mild glory of that holy harmony, whose last notes trembled on her half-open lips, and her glance so suddenly raised, so suddenly withdrawn,—he recognised all—it was herself—the very female he had saved !—She evidently did not know him,—he was much altered by his illness, and this was the first time he thought or felt he was. He still continued to gaze on her, as we watch the sleep of a beautiful

infant, delighted with its calm unconscious beauty, and feeling that when it awakes it will turn to us with looks of love.

The congregation were dispersing ; the elderly lady and her young companion made several unassisted attempts to open the pew-door ; at length De Courcy recollected himself, and attempted to assist them, but his trembling hands only increased the difficulty, and Montgomery, who was in the aisle, was obliged to release the party. As they went out, the young lady, with a motion that seemed rather the result of religious benignity than of worldly courtesy, turned and slightly bowed to De Courcy. He saw once more those eyes that breathed of heaven ; and the unuttered sound that trembled on her lip had more of sweetness than any that courtly politeness ever breathed or dictated ; and the grace of her fairy form, as it glided down the aisle, left him without power to follow her but with his eyes.

“I am much altered,” said he to himself, “yet *she* might have known me;” and a feeling like pride mingled in his determination not to claim her notice. He watched her;—she turned and looked steadily at him;—a smile of bright and timid pleasure trembled over her beautiful features for a moment, the next she appeared to grow very weak, and caught the arm of the elderly lady for support, while she feebly extended one hand towards De Courcy. He rushed forward and caught it; the elderly lady appeared alarmed, and Montgomery looked on in silent amazement; for some moments he thought that De Courcy’s delirium had returned, and a considerable time elapsed before a short and hurried explanation introduced them to each other. There was much embarrassment in the manner of the elderly lady as she indistinctly alluded to the eventful night of Eva’s danger, and pressed De Courcy to al-

low her family an opportunity of expressing their gratitude to him under their own roof. Charles bowed in silent delight, and they then separated.

De Courcy wandered away alone ; he wished to be far from the city, from its inhabitants, from all mankind if possible. At length he felt himself in the country ; the cold clear splendour of a winter night was around him ; he was at last alone with his own heart, and its new-born inmate, passion in its first purity and brightness. He communed with himself and was still. Oh, what gleams of heaven burst on the soul in such a moment, when creation seems renewed, and we awake to an existence so new, so bright, so delicious, that the very elements seem to harmonize with our feelings ; and the stars, and heaven itself, appear to hold a silent alliance with the thoughts that are burning within us ! He looked round him, and the earth, though in dark-

ness, appeared lovelier to him than in the brightest noon of a summer's day. He looked upward, and wondered that the stars had never appeared so resplendent to him before. He sighed, and felt respiration itself a delight. He tried a thousand times to utter some name that seemed at the bottom of his heart, but knew not what name to call on ;—his whole mind seemed but one idea—his whole existence but one feeling ;—a glow like that of summer pervaded his whole frame, and he trembled with a grateful consciousness of life he had never known before. It was so late when he awoke from his delirium, that he found on his arrival at the College the gates were shut. One might have supposed his situation comfortless enough as he leaned against the iron railing till the gates were opened ; but those moments were perhaps the most delicious of his existence. What dreams were his ?—The dreams that passion sheds

but once on the heart before its purity has received a tinge from the senses, or its ardour can anticipate the possibility of disappointment or infelicity !

CHAPTER III.

Πικρὸν ὄψεσθαι ἡτλησόμεαι.

EURIPIDES.

THE next day, at an early hour, De Courcy was in Dominick Street; he easily discovered the house—it was a handsome, but a very grave-looking one. The name of “Wentworth” was on the door. There are some houses that seem to bespeak their inhabitants, and De Courcy had a kind of feeling that this was one of them, at the moment he touched the knocker. He was shewn into a room furnished plainly, but in a manner that shewed if luxuries were wanting, wealth certainly was not, and in a few minutes Mrs Wentworth entered the room. He had now leisure to observe her, and the bare circumstance of her being an inmate in the same house with that object,

gave an indescribable interest to the observation. She appeared about fifty years of age ; her person was plain ; but her clear commanding eye, the severe simplicity of her manners, and a consciousness of perfect sincerity accompanying every word she uttered, and communicating itself irresistibly to her hearers, made one respect her the moment they beheld her, and love her a very few moments afterwards. Withdrawn and recollected from the embarrassment of the preceding night, her manner appeared comparatively cold, but it was rather the coldness of habit than of character ; there was more, too, of the measured and limited phraseology of the evangelical people in her conversation ; but when she continued to speak for any time, one easily saw that the range of her mind was far more extensive than that of the objects to which it was confined. She herself appeared to feel this self-imposed constraint, and to escape from it from time to time, but soon return-

ed again ; and the final impression which she left was that of strong sense, rigid rectitude of principle and conduct, and a temper and heart naturally warm, but subdued by the power of religion.

She expressed herself with earnest gratitude to De Courcy for the preservation of her niece, and then made the most minute and searching enquiries into the events of that strange night. During the detail which De Courcy gave, she was so much agitated, that he would have paused had she not urged him to go on, with an earnestness very remote from curiosity.

“ And can you possibly, madam,” said De Courcy, “ guess at the authors or the motives of this outrage ?” Mrs Wentworth was silent.—“ It is a most mysterious proceeding,” said De Courcy, anxious to relieve himself from this embarrassing silence.

“ There is a mystery,” said Mrs Wentworth, speaking almost involuntarily, and

while she spoke she shewed so much agitation, that the subject was dropped as if by mutual and tacit consent.

The silence that followed was broke by the entrance of Mr Wentworth, in whom De Courcy recognized the uncle. The appearance of this man almost dissolved the spell which appears to us to hang over every object dwelling under the roof of those we love, and attracts the heart irresistibly, even to inanimate things, which they have consecrated by a touch or a look. His manners were repulsive, his understanding narrow, and his principles inflexibly rigid; his mind was rather tenacious than strong; what little he knew, he knew thoroughly, and what he once acquired he retained for ever. Early in life he had made a large fortune with a spotless character, and having retired from business, found his mind utterly vacant; by the persuasion of his wife, he was induced to listen to the evangelical preachers, and (as !

is often the case with converts either in early youth or in advanced life,) in a short time he far outwent his preceptors. Calvinism, Calvinism was every thing with him ; his expertness in the five points would have foiled even their redoubtable refuter, Dr Whitby himself ; but his theology having obtained full possession of his head, seemed so satisfied with its conquest, that it never ventured to invade his heart. His mind was completely filled with a system of doctrines, and his conversation with a connexion of phrases, which he often uttered mechanically, but sometimes with a force that imposed not only on others, but on himself. In this state he was perhaps as happy as he could be, for he had a gratifying sense of his own importance, and his conscience was kept tranquil by listening to or repeating sounds, which to him had all the effect of things. Never was Mirabeau's acute remark, that " words are things," more

strongly verified than in the case of Mr. Wentworth's religion.

Mrs Wentworth introduced them to each other, and, hoping to warm her husband's coldness, was loud in her praises of De Courcy's courage and humanity. Mr Wentworth listened with the impatient air of a man who is waiting to speak himself; and then turning to De Courcy, exhorted him to consider himself under every dispensation, whether of providence or grace, as the humble and worthless instrument of Divine Power.

"I trust, young man, that you consider yourself (though the preserver of my niece,) as not a jot higher in the divine eye than those who were probably leagued against her life. They may yet be as brands snatched from the burning, and so, through Divine Power, may you."

De Courcy, unused to this language, could only answer by silent blushes and bows; but these bows and blushes became

him much, and Wentworth at once set him down as a convert. Mrs Wentworth, who felt as much for her husband as for him, was beginning to express her regret that her niece could not thank him in person, and her surprise that so long an interval had elapsed previous to his introduction, when Montgomery entered the room, and enquired after Eva with all the familiarity of *l'ami du famille*.

De Courcy felt thunderstruck. By a tenacity as strong as it was unaccountable, he had never mentioned to Montgomery the events of that extraordinary night. It floated in his imagination like a vision; and Montgomery, occupied by his attention to his patient, had never believed that any intercourse existed between him and the Wentworth family, till their brief and singular introduction at the Bethesda Chapel, the preceding evening. Mrs Wentworth answered his enquiries after Eva, and then, apparently forcing herself to give some ac-

count of De Courcy being present, said, in a low voice and hesitating manner, that the family owed him unspeakable obligations for the services he had rendered Eva. Montgomery instantly extended his hand in frank and cordial gratitude, though he was totally unconscious of the nature of the services alluded to. De Courcy gave his in return, but it was with a coldness he could not account for; the ardour of Montgomery's enquiries had infused a chillness into him, which, while he disdained himself for, he could not resist. At this moment they would have been delighted to have exchanged situations; Montgomery would have wished to be her preserver, and De Courcy to be her friend. He soon after retired, not without a warm invitation from Mrs Wentworth to dine with them on the following day; it was as sincerely, though not as warmly repeated by Mr Wentworth, and De Courcy accepted it with a delight he dared not express.

"We do not live in the world," said Mrs Wentworth, in a qualifying manner ; "there are only grave quiet people to be with us ; but at your age I trust you are rather governed by your feelings than by the world in your choice of society."

"I trust," said Wentworth, "he is governed by neither, but by grace." And so they parted.

The next day he dined at Dominick-Street, and found that Mrs Wentworth's qualifying manner was not without a meaning, for he was introduced to a class of society whom he had never before met with. A large evangelical party dined at the house, (for the evangelical people remunerate themselves for renouncing the mixed assemblies of the world by frequent meetings among themselves,) and the men and women were unlike any men and women De Courcy had ever encountered before. The women all dressed with the utmost simplicity, with absolute plainness, arms

covered to the wrists, and necks to the ears ; no distinction of appearance between maid and matron, except that the former wore their hair very simply arranged ; and the latter, however young, had their heads invariable covered. The men—they neither paid the general attention to women that is usual in mixed companies, nor separated in groups to talk of politics ; they sat apart “ on their chairs sublime, in thought more elevate, and reasoned high.” De Courcy heard terms used by them, some of which he did not understand, and others which he did, he thought quite unfit for loose and general discussion. He felt himself quite disconsolate ; and approaching a gentleman who stood leaning against one of the windows, he ventured a few observations on the position of the allied armies, then sufficiently interesting and critical, for *it was in the close of the eventful year 1813.*

“ Very true, sir,” said the gentleman,

with a contraction of countenance that appeared to De Courcy quite pantomimic, "very true ; you are speaking of the downfall of the power of Buonaparte, but have you ever thought of the means of overthrowing the power of Satan, and extending the kingdom of Christ ?"

Dinner was announced at the end of this triumphant sentence,—the party mixed,—the dinner was excellent, but without parade ; the first course contained the substance of two or three more splendid but less substantial. De Courcy remarked particularly the man who had rebutted him just as they went down to dinner. He was tall, but very ungraceful ; a strange consciousness of importance mingled itself most uncouthly with his coarse figure and awkward manners ; his hair was red ; his eye small, but keen and piercing ; his voice powerful, but not melodious ; most repulsively softened when he addressed females, to whom, however, he paid obvious atten-

tion. He never spoke but on one subject, and on that his eloquence was overpowering, and his information profound, but it was only on one side ; he was a sturdy orthodox Calvinist, skilful in argument, vehement in declamation, and amply equipped with weapons from the old armoury of Geneva, well furbished by modern artists, which he wielded with equal force and dexterity. But his manners, his habits of disputation, and even his pulpit oratory, powerful as it was, were strongly tinged with the original vulgarity of his origin and nature.

He was the son of a poor labourer, the tenant of a wealthy gentleman in Cork, whose wife was evangelical ; she instructed the children of her husband's tenants in her own system ; her husband gave her no disturbance ; he followed his fox-hounds all day, and damned his wife's Methodism over his claret all night. The good lady went her own way, and discovering in this

lad, maugre his fierce red hair and bare broad feet, evident marks of his being "a growing and gracious character;" and astonished at the fluency and eloquence with which he repeated his acquired creed, and gave the word of exhortation to his ragged family, wondering round the mud-walls of his native cabin, and exhorted the old women (who, gossiping, squabbling, and even drinking forty yards distant from the chapel door, fell on their knees in the mire at the tinkling of the bell which announced the elevation of the Host) to turn from the error of their ways, and seek the Lord.—She proposed a subscription among her friends to enable him to enter the university, and be qualified "to minister at the altar."

The subscription went on zealously, and young Macowen entered College; but when once there, *his views*, as they were called, expanded so rapidly, that no Church Episcopalian, Presbyterian, or Independent, had

the good fortune precisely to suit his sentiments in orthodoxy of system, or purity of discipline. Thus he moved a splendid and errattick meteor, shedding his light on the churches as he passed, but defying them all to calculate his orbit, or ascertain his direction. In the mean time, it had been suggested to him that many evangelical females, of large fortune, would not be unwilling to share his fate. This hint, often repeated and readily believed, threw a most odious suavity into his manner; his overblown vulgar courtesy was like the flowers of the poppy, all glare and stench. Under these circumstances, he had become the intimate of the Wentworth family; and from the moment he beheld Eva, his feelings were what he could not describe, and would not account for even to himself, but what he was determined implicitly to follow. His system took part with his inclinations, and in a short time he believed it a duty to impress her with the conviction that her sal-

vation must depend on her being united with him. When a perverted conscience is in league with the passions, their joint influence is irresistible.

There is, among the evangelical people, an establishment something like the Court of Wards, abolished under James the First ; a determination to dispose of wealthy unmarried females to distinguished professors or preachers, who are not equally favoured by fortune ; and the families of the former conceive themselves not only honoured, but benefited by the exchange. Thus the evangelical system is rapidly assuming the aspect of the papal, and, by the union of intellectual influence with actual wealth, bids fair to rival it in power as well as in pretensions. On this Macowen relied much, and, strange to say, on his personal advantages still more. He had been strongly recommended to the Wentworths, and held in the family something like the office of director in a Catholic continental family ; but from the moment he beheld De

Courcy, he felt his influence shaken. His beauty, his youth, his distinguished services,—the enthusiasm of feeling that trembled in his light and graceful form,—the broken music of his firm mellow voice, as he addressed even the relatives of Eva,—the deep but vanishing crimson of his cheek, as for a moment, at the end of his hurried enquiry after her, his eye fell on herself,—and the sudden dropping of his white eyelids, with their rich, dark, humid fringe, through which the eye spoke more than words could utter—all this Macowen saw, and looked at him askance, “with jealous leer malign.” The dinner went on; the men and women, seated alternately, spoke of their popular preachers, and of popular works of evangelical divinity, and of eloquent speeches made at the meetings of the Bible Society, and of the diffusion of the gospel throughout Ireland; and they uttered sundry strictures on the parochial clergy who opposed the circulation of evan-

gelical tracts, with many a by-blow at the contrast between the Calvinistic articles of the Church of England, and the Arminian creed of her modern sons.

Such was the conversation; and when the women retired, it was not a whit more enlarged. One man talked incessantly of the "election of grace," his mind literally seemed not to have room for another idea; every sentence, if it did not begin, ended with the same phrase, and every subject only furnished matter for its introduction. Dr Thorpe's last sermon at Bethesda was spoken of in terms of high and merited panegyric.

"Very true," said he; "but—a—a— Did you think there was enough of election in it?"

A late work of the same author (his clever pamphlet on the Catholic petition) was mentioned.

"But does he say any thing of election in it?"

"There was no opportunity," said Mr Wentworth.

"Then he should have made one—Ah, I would give very little for a book that did not assert the election of grace!"

Once seated in his election-saddle, he posted on with alarming speed, and ended with declaring, that Elisha Coles, on God's Sovereignty, was worth all the divinity that ever was written. "I have a large collection of the works of godly writers," said he, turning to De Courcy, "but not one work that ever was, would I resign for that of Elisha Coles."

"Won't you except the Bible?" said De Courcy, smiling.

"Oh, yes—the Bible—ay, to be sure, the Bible," said the discomfited champion of election; "but still, you know"—and he continued to mutter something about Elisha Coles, on God's Sovereignty.

Another, who never stopped talking, appeared to De Courcy a complete evangeli-

cal *time-keeper* ;—the same ceaseless ticking sound ;—the same vacillating motion of the head and body ; and his whole conversation turning on the various lengths of the sermons he had heard, of which, it appeared, he was in the habit of listening to four every Sunday.

“ Mr Matthias preached exactly forty-eight minutes. I was at Mr Cooper’s exhortation at Plunket-street in the evening, and it was precisely fifty-three minutes.”

“ And how many seconds ?” said Mrs Wentworth, smiling, for she felt the ridicule of this.

Close to De Courcy were two very young men, who were comparing the respective progress they had made in the conversion of some of their relations. They spoke on this subject with a familiarity that certainly made De Courcy start.

“ My aunt is almost entirely converted,” said one. “ She never goes to church now, though she never missed early prayers at

St Thomas's for forty years before. Now," with a strange tone of triumph, "now, is your sister converted as much as that?"

"Yes—yes—she is," answered the other eagerly; "for* she burned her Week's Preparation yesterday, and my mother's too along with it."

The other was dumb at this incontrovertible mark of conversion. De Courcy felt shocked; for he thought, however opposite to their sentiments might be the contents of the book in question, this *auto da fe* of its pages might have been spared; and he recollected the decent superstition of the Turks, who collect and preserve with the greatest care every scrap of paper on which the name of God has been accidentally written. At last De Courcy tried to ingratiate himself with the party, by attempting to speak on the only subject discussed among them; and, in answer to some observation

* Fact; me ipso teste.

of Macowen's, he tasked his memory to cite some passages from Fletcher's eloquent "Appeal." Macowen at once silenced him, by telling him, with a chilling look, that Fletcher was an Arminian; and as little as he understood of the phrase, it was enough to signify that he was *hors de combat* in the present engagement. He made one more faint attempt to rally by quoting a passage, which he imagined to possess resplendent beauty and truth, from "Coelebs in search of a Wife." It was that fine speech of Lucilla's father, where he speaks of the internal evidence a believer has of his own conversion; and concludes with the utmost felicity of allusion, "One thing the Christian knows, that whereas he was blind he now seeth."

De Courcy spoke with eloquent animation; but the dubious shake of the head, the sigh of stifled reprehension, the "damning of faint praise," made him feel that heterodoxy was not confined to Arminianism

alone in the opinion of the party ; and that Hannah More herself, in spite of her ample strides to the evangelical side of the question, was still regarded by rigid Calvinists as "little better than she should be." All he had now to do, was to cover his retreat by "joining the ladies;" and never was retreat effected with less glory and more satisfaction. But when he arrived in the drawing-room, the same monotonous and repulsive stillness ; the same dry circle (in whose verge no spirit could be raised) reduced him to the same petrifying medium with all around. The females were collected round the tea-table ; the conversation was carried on in pensive whispers ; a large table near them was spread with evangelical tracts, &c. The room was hung with dark-brown paper ; and the four unsnuffed candles burning dimly (the light of two of them almost absorbed in the dark bays that covered the table on which they stood,) gave just the light that Young might have

written by, when the Duke of Grafton sent him a human skull, with a taper in it, as an appropriate candelabrum for his tragedy writing-desk. The ladies sometimes took up these tracts, shook a head of deep conviction over their contents, laid them down, and the same stillness recurred. The very hissing of the tea-urn, and the crackling of the coals, was a relief to De Courcy's ears.

The fact was, his presence was a constraint on them ; for religious people never feel themselves quite at ease, except in the presence of those whose opinions are similar to their own, or so opposite as to justify a challenge to open a controversy. De Courcy felt this, and also felt that the constraint he imposed was doubled on himself ; still he lingered, for he had a hope to support him—the hope that brought him there ; and, though not yet realized, it seemed to grow stronger every moment its indulgence was suspended. He might yet

obtain one glance from Eva, one conscious look, any thing that intimated they had met before, met even in terror and distress ; for any thing allied to strong emotion, seems to us allied to love, and we can hardly see those who have participated with us in strong emergencies, without feeling a tie of the heart to them. A stranger, with whom we have suffered shipwreck, appears ever after to us as a friend. For a look he had come, and for a look he still waited. When he appeared before dinner, she had recognized him only by a slight bow, and afterwards appeared engaged among the females of the party ; and now, though nearer to her than before, her down-cast eyes were fixed on some netting, and though silent, she appeared deeply attentive to the few words that were uttered near her. It was only at a moment when all eyes happened to be withdrawn from her, (except De Courcy's,) that she raised hers, and their smile, for hers were eyes that could smile,

made him feel more than all the eloquence that gratitude or passion ever poured forth. Oh ! how a smile can repay love, even for the sacrifice of life ; how hearts can understand each other, when the eyes alone are the interpreters between them ; and language, in all its infinite variety, affords nothing so expressive as a look ! Yet, in the look of Eva, there was nothing for presumption, or even for hope to dream of ; in her beautiful eyes nothing could be read but the timid thanks of a helpless terrified girl for protection from danger,—thanks which she had not the courage to convey in words, and which she felt it almost a crime to express by a look. For months after he fed on that look ; it came to him like a beam of light, and he forgot whether it was day or night when it glanced before his eyes.

The whispers of the party were now faintly rising into articulate murmurs, and De Courcy caught some singular sentences. Mrs Wentworth asked a drooping onsump-

tive girl next to De Courcy, how far she had got in the Pilgrim's Progress.

"I have got no further than the *Slough of Despond*, ma'am," said the poor girl, with a phthysicky querulousness of accent almost ludicrous.

On his other hand sat a lady, whose life was divided between the kitchen and the conventicle; and a singular tinge, from her divided pursuits, pervaded her conversation. She was giving a history of her converting her cook, but made perpetual digressions to a fillet of veal that had been overdone the day before. "And, Mary, after my reading to you, says I, three sermons of Romaine's this very day, and leaving Burder's Village Sermons on your dresser, I did not expect, Mary, you would have spoiled that veal—you should think of your duty, Mary, at your spit, and not have spoiled that veal,—but indeed," in a lowered, confidential voice, "the jack is not so good as it ought to be."

In a few moments the rest of the party came up, and then Charles witnessed a new scene. The evenings of religious people are necessarily monotonous; they do not dance, they do not play cards, and music (except sacred music) is rarely admitted. When tea was over, and it was a long operation, (for men who drink little wine are much attached to the milder excitement of the tea-table) a table was placed in the centre of the room, with a Bible and a Hymn-Book; a layman of distinguished gifts was requested to "give a word of exhortation," and some clerical members of the party were urgent in the request. He complied, and opening the Bible, selected a verse from the Epistle to the Romans, and addressed the audience in an *extempore* discourse. The language was excellent, and the matter equally so, to those who relish Calvinistic divinity. At the conclusion, another of the party gave a long *extempore* prayer, in which he petitioned the Deity

that the eyes of *one*, who was yet in darkness, might be enlightened to behold the glory of the truth; and Charles, who felt that he was the only one to whom the petition was applicable, blushed, even on his knees, at the application.

The service concluded with a hymn, in which most of the company joined, some with science, but all with devotion. The harmony was good, for there were many voices; yet Charles could hear but one.—Her angel figure, as it bent over the harp,—her white slender arms,—her clustering locks, thrown back by a motion of the head, so graceful, yet so infantine,—and her up-cast eyes, as their pale-blue lustre broke from beneath the shade of her ringlets, might have made a poet or a painter think of a young Cecilia in her first moments of inspiration, but could make a lover only think of herself.

The party separated early; and Charles, though surprised, was pleased to find that

no allusion was made to the adventure of the preceding evening, nor did it even appear to be known to the rest of the party. He could not bear the thought of standing like a mark for congratulation to be discharged at by strangers ; but even the fear of it was spared him. In fact, Mr and Mrs Wentworth wished the subject to be never known, or soon forgot ; the latter from strong and just reasons, and the former because he had the sense, in all important matters, to be governed by his wife.

CHAPTER IV.

Τι τοῦτο δὲ λογιέται ἀνθρώποις ἔχει
 Ἡδίστοι, αὖ πάλι, ἀλγύνει δ' ἄρα.

EURIPIDES.

FROM that day Charles became an admitted member of the family ; he was invited almost every day, for the Wentworths appeared to feel their obligations in proportion as they concealed the expression of them. Every day in that family was exactly like another ; a succession of evangelical guests, or evangelical topics, filled up every hour. Sometimes the strong and cultivated mind of Mrs Wentworth threw a gleam of light across the narrow horizon to which she had bounded herself, but it was soon darkened. Yet this cheerless monotonous existence, this life of phrases, (for he had not acquired the feelings of the

party,) was to Charles the most exquisite delight. He saw her every day, every day he heard her voice, though not addressed to him ;—a single movement of her figure, unconscious as she was of its graces, plunged him in a delicious reverie for hours ;—a single word, addressed to him accidentally, left him without power to reply to it, and then he retired to repeat it to himself like a spell, till his senses became giddy with delight.

When we first feel passion, the presence of the object beloved is all we seek on earth ; we imagine that if we are but admitted to its sight, every wish of the heart is fulfilled ; and, like the Persians before their God, we only ask to see, and kneel, and worship. But in a short time the sight of that object whom we love, beheld under circumstances of constant constraint,—the sight of an object whom we can see as we wish, but cannot speak to as we feel, the struggle of the “ bursting heart and reined tongue ” become insupportable. Every day he saw her

he drank deeper and deeper the intoxicating draught which he had not the courage to keep from his lips, though he felt it maddened him. But the constraints under which he saw her became every day more insupportable ;—to see her, and to see her constantly among strangers, to whom her sole attention was devoted ;—to see her, yet to feel that her eyes were never turned towards him ; to hear her, and to watch for a monosyllable addressed to himself, on which he might feed for a day ;—to contrive a thousand devices that her dress might touch him as she passed,—that he might, in turning over the leaves of her music as she sat at the harp, touch her fingers, or feel her odorous breath pass near his cheek ;—to waste the day in expedients to be near her, and feel that to be near her was to be every day nearer madness ;—yet to suffer all this in the presence of strangers,—beings among whom he felt as if they did not understand his language,—as

if they formed no part of his creation,—as if they could see him die, and never ask the cause, or understand it if it was told ; —to do this long was impossible.

The presence of a beloved object, surrounded by strangers, is worse than absence to those who love ; for it forbids those illusions of the imagination which absence indulges. Solitude becomes a relief, compared to the necessity of suppressed emotion, increasing in proportion to the increasing force of that emotion ; that presence then becomes a torment we cannot bear ; we wish to be as far as possible from constraint, from witnesses, even from the object we love ; we wish to be able to exclaim aloud, to vent inarticulate cries, and to seek in the silence of nature that relief which society seems sworn to deny us. In these fatal indulgences of passion, stealing glances and sounds to feed its feverish appetite in solitude,—of days wasted in watching for a look, and nights in recalling them ;

in this existence of dreams, four months were passed away, and with them Charles's health and spirits, and vital resources, were passing away swiftly also. All on a sudden he discontinued his visits at Wentworth's, for he felt he could no longer support the sight of that face whose every glance seemed to be drinking up his blood.

Her coldness appeared increasing too, though, in fact, her manners had not undergone the least alteration ; but in proportion as his own feelings became more fervid, her's must, by contrast, have necessarily appeared colder. In climates where the ardour and brilliancy of the sun are beyond the conception of a European imagination, the *coup de soleil* is often fatal ; so it was faring with Charles,—he sickened under the brightness of the object by whose light he lived. Perhaps a little more knowledge of the female character would have enabled him to draw a conclusion more favourable to the wishes he did not dare to utter ; but

the penetration of Charles, wholly unaided by vanity, could never discover that timid silence is the most expressive language in which a young female can intimate the absence of indifference. When he had torn himself from Wentworth's, he gave up all society; not even Montgomery was admitted: He gave up all study, all literary pursuits; but read still those few works in which passion is represented in a state of wild intoxication, or hopeless despondency. All day he spent in his rooms, and in the evening his wasting figure was sometimes seen in the College Park, shunning and shunned; for even those who did not know the cause of his dejection, were repelled by its effects, and the gay De Courcy was deserted by all.

It was now spring, but the weather was cold and ungenial, and the trees were bare; nothing could be more suitable to the gloomy complexion of the season and the scene, than that figure, once eminent above

all human forms for grace and elegance, now withered and bending like the dry branches under which he glided, or against which he leant, while the damp clay on which he stood was no paler than his cheek, and the stormy sky above was not darker or more agitated than his mind. These late unwholesome walks, followed by nights of total restlessness,—nights in which, after traversing his room for hours, he threw himself on his bed, still dressed, not to sleep, but to dream, wore away rapidly both his frame and his constitution. “His beauty was gone for very heaviness,”—spirits and rest were lost, and the willing victim was rapidly sinking into the grave.

One fatal indulgence, which he still pursued, was only calculated to feed the distemper which it seemed to relieve:—He often went out at a late hour, alone and unsuspected, to wander near the house, and guess at her form as it glided past the windows, and listen to the sound of her harp

and her voice, when the evangelical party, usually assembled there, joined in hymns. That voice, in his present exhausted state, would have been more than he could bear, had he been in her presence; but its notes, "by distance made more sweet," combined all the luxury of melancholy with the intoxication of passion. He listened, and imagined that such sounds might perhaps be uttered over his grave, and he would have resigned his spirit that moment to have had its parting soothed by such a requiem. He did not know that the voice which filled him with such delicious anguish was observed, by those who heard it, to grow every day fainter, and that the cheek of Eva was growing paler every day, while those who watched it never guessed what worm was preying on its rose; nor, had he known it, would he have divined the cause more than they. The impression that he had received of her was that of a being so devoted to God, that man

could have no share in her thoughts or her heart; he regarded her as something enshrined and sanctified, to whom the mention of earthly things would have been an insult, and of earthly passion, almost impiety.

Even to himself, his love almost appeared a crime, and it seemed to cost him less to die of its concealment, than to disclose it. The change in his health now grew alarming. Montgomery, whose feeling but proud mind could not stoop to solicit for confidence, grew every day more wretched about him; and, at length, accidentally learning his guardian's direction, wrote to him, guardedly but explicitly—stating the desperate situation of Charles, as well as his obstinacy in refusing all medical advice, or friendly communication on the subject.

Mr Asgill, on the receipt of this letter, came instantly to town. He first waited on Montgomery, to whom he expressed his thanks in a voice choked by his emotions,

and then made some enquiries about the state of Charles, which perhaps he had ascribed to other causes. But Montgomery had told all he knew, and could now only express his hope that Mr Asgill had not come too late. Mr Asgill then went to Charles—he was alone as usual, and when he saw this respectable man, for whom he had always felt veneration, and still as much affection as his heart had yet to spare, he rushed forward to meet him, with a mixture of cordiality and secret shame, that burned on his cheek, and troubled in every limb. Mr Asgill was prepared from Montgomery's letter for this interview; but he was not prepared for the object he encountered. It was not in the damp emaciated fingers he wrung in his; nor in the hollow cheek, where one feverish spot burnt deeply; nor in the sunk eyes, whose wandering fires burnt fiercely one moment, and the next seemed extinguished in their sockets; nor in that wasted frame, where the slight-

ness of youth seemed rapidly yielding to the attenuation of death, that he could discover a trace of the beautiful, graceful, healthful form, that he had parted with a few months before in all the pride of youth and strength. The old man's voice was lost; his hand remained helpless in Charles's; he tottered from strong emotion.

"Won't you sit down, sir?" said Charles; and his voice, retaining all its former sweetness, restored Mr Asgill's recollection.

"I will—I will," said he; accepting the offer not from courtesy, but necessity—and he sunk into a chair, covering his face with his hands. The next moment he looked up; the glow of meeting had faded from Charles's face, it was the hue of clay—and the old man could only repeat—"I thought—I hoped—and this is the state in which I find you?—Oh! Charles—if"——

The crimson spot burned stronger than ever on the cheek of the sufferer, as he replied,—"And can you, sir, for a moment,"

—His own voice was suppressed by shame and grief, as he added faintly—" I may be wretched, but I never was vicious."

" And what, *what* then can be the cause of the state in which I find you ?" A dead silence followed the question. Mr Asgill repeated the question.

" I am not ill," said Charles, faintly ; " I am not indeed," he repeated more earnestly as he observed that his assertion was only answered by a melancholy shake of the head. He extended his hand with strong emotion to his old friend, as a kind of assurance ; Mr Asgill took it, he held it in his for a moment, looked at the skeleton fingers with agony ; the tears burst from his aged eyes. Charles sunk into his chair again ; the old man, wiping away his tears, hastily retired, without adding a word.

The next day he returned, accompanied by a gentleman, and Charles could not refuse to see his former tutor's friend, though all human society was a burthen to him.

The stranger was a man of extensive information and agreeable manners ; and it was only by his at length leading the conversation to medical subjects, that Charles discovered he was a physician. He had been brought for the purpose, and Charles did not oppose it ; he answered his questions, and the doctor and Mr Asgill soon retired. Montgomery happened to be in the room ; and he heard Charles after they were gone, murmuring to himself, " Canst thou minister to a mind diseased ?"

The next day, various prescriptions appeared ; and Charles, too gentle to oppose, and too indifferent to reject, or willing to pacify Mr Asgill by a compliance that he thought would be his last ; or, perhaps, indulging a secret hope that those medicines might expedite an effect contrary to their intended purpose, submitted to take them—but his disease was beyond their reach—he grew every day visibly worse ; and Dr H——, whose candour was equal to his

skill, told Mr Asgill that he feared the patient's distemper was in his mind; then Asgill's influence, and Montgomery's entreaties, were exerted in vain to discover the cause. Determined on preserving his desperate secret, Charles's constancy was proof to all importunity, but his health suffered by the struggle. He was now confined to his bed—the proud Montgomery had humbled himself even to kneel before him, but Charles, believing that no human influence could avail for him, cherished his secret with that melancholy pride which seeks from disappointment what it has been denied by hope, and declined all solicitation with a quietness that leaves repetition no hope and no excuse.

His fever increased; Montgomery now remained with him day and night, and availed himself of the helpless situation of Charles to pay him those attentions which he feared would have been rejected if he had had the power. One night, after re-

ring much. Charles fell into a feverish doze; Montgomery alone was in the room, for Mr Asgill, yielding to his infirmities, had quitted him after midnight. His sleep was broken by startings and mutterings. Montgomery drew nearer to the bed—"Her heart is fixed on God alone," he murmured; "she disdains man—she disdains man—she disdains me." He then talked incoherently about Mr Asgill having come to town to marry him, but only arriving in time to inter him. He laughed frightfully—then he grew calmer, and spoke of his own burial—"Lay me somewhere that her foot may tread on me—perhaps she may shrink—no,—she has already trod on my heart, what matters its dust?" He then seemed to be speaking to some friends who were trying to intercede for him—"No, no, don't speak to her—she is a soul so pure—one burning sigh of mine would blast her—when she appears before God, to be the object of earthly passion would be a spot on her robe of glory—

let me die—but do not tell her of it. Yes—yes—(appearing to address Mr Asgill)—I would pray, but my prayers are sins—and ~~her's~~ are pure incense—do not pollute them with my dying groan.” Montgomery listened in that vague terror (at first) with which we hear the raving dreams of a feverish man—but when he heard her name pronounced with a sigh that convulsed the frame of the sufferer, he could enjoy the “bliss of ignorance” no longer—Montgomery loved her himself.

In a few moments Charles awoke—he started up,—“Montgomery, are you there?—Oh! yes, you never leave me—Montgomery, have I been raving?—my head is”—Montgomery bid him compose himself—“But did I mention any name?—the name that——”

Montgomery, who, to the living or the dying, never spoke but the truth, pressed him to take some composing medicine that had been ordered for him, that he might

evade the answer ; Charles took it, and sunk back in a state of stupefaction. Montgomery trembled while he held it to his lips, and then retired ; the air of the room, which he had never felt oppressive before, had become intolerable in a moment. Charles's windows had been left open by the orders of the physician ; he hurried to one of them, and leaned far out of it, gasping for breath. He felt in a moment the cause of Charles's sufferings, and in bitter, but generous anguish, felt that the sacrifice he was about to make might be attended with similar sufferings to himself. In a moment, he saw, as he imagined, the issue of the whole affair. Montgomery could reason coolly, though he could feel warmly, and he said to himself, " I have no chance, or if I had"—The thoughts of Charles's ample fortune, the resistless attractions of his person, the sincerity of his attachment, (almost fatally testified) rushed on his mind like overbearing witnesses against him.

Montgomery had the rare faculty of feeling in cases where he was a party as if he were only a judge, and he determined the case instantly; he did not quit Charles till daylight; he had resolved to wait on Mr Asgill directly, and disclose the truth; but as he quitted the room, and stole one glance at the sufferer, a selfish thought (a rare inmate) visited him for one moment. "He is dying," said he to himself; "yes—he is perhaps dying," he added, "and I may save his life." In the morning he went to Mr Asgill.

CHAPTER V.

MR ASGILL received him with eager enquiries about Charles ; for the morning revives alike the hopes of the sick, and of those who watch them, though they have no other hope. Montgomery immediately spoke to the point ; he told Mr Asgill that he had (involuntarily) learned from Charles's ravings in a dream, the real cause of his sufferings,—that he was dying of a complaint that few suspected, and still fewer suffered from. Mr Asgill listened to him at first with surprise, for the old cannot easily believe that life depends on feelings they have long ceased to feel ; but in a few moments his solicitude for Charles overcame the incredulity of age, and though he would have

heard with ridicule the tale of a young man dying for love,—when that young man was Charles, every thing vanished before the wish to save him—“ he believed all things, endured all things”—and eagerly pressed Montgomery for the name of the lady, and for the means of introduction to the family.

It was then Montgomery's heart was wrung ; he saw from Mr Asgill's eagerness that nothing would be left undone to facilitate the match, and he hesitated so long before he could answer his enquiries, that had Mr Asgill had eyes, ears, or perception for any object but one, the truth could hardly have escaped him.

“ Her name is Wentworth,” said Montgomery, speaking with some difficulty ; and he added, that she resided with her uncle.

“ And is she so beautiful ?” said Mr Asgill,—“ is she so excellent ?—is she indeed worthy of Charles ?”

To dwell on her image at the moment

he was resigning her, was too much even for Montgomery; after a vain effort to speak, he pressed his hand to his damp forehead, and, complaining of fatigue, attempted to retire.

"You must be very much fatigued," said Mr Asgill; "and I was too selfish, too fond of Charles I mean, to press you to speak; but you will have a harder task to fulfil to announce to him his happiness—(for I have scarce a doubt of it)—yet I would not undertake it, it would be too much for me; you must be the messenger, and, considering his precarious state, it will be a difficult task."

"It will be a difficult task to me," said Montgomery; and collecting all his resolution, he went away to watch by the bed of Charles. Mr Asgill hastened to Wentworth's, and it was not till he was at the door that the strangeness of his commission struck him, and the chance of failure came over him like a sudden chill. He was

going, a stranger, to solicit strangers, of whose manners, habits, feelings, and interests he was totally ignorant, in behalf of one who might be as indifferent to them as he was dear to him. They might have disposed of her otherwise, or she might be averse to him, or a thousand circumstances might arise that would render the interview ineffectual, and even ridiculous. All this passed through his mind, but along with it came the image of Charles as he saw him last, pale, wasted, and raving; and the hand which he had raised to the door was suspended no longer. If we have ardour in youth, in age we have tenacity, and Mr Asgill felt a confidence, from interest being on his side, which never enters into the calculations of the young. He announced his name, and in a few moments Mrs Wentworth waited on him.

“I am a stranger, madam,” said Mr Asgill; “but the occasion on which I wait on you will not admit of forms.” Mrs Went-

worth bowed, and sate in an attitude of attention. "I have a friend,—a young friend, most dear to me, who has the honour, I understand, to be your acquaintance. He is, I fear, dying; but his recovery,—his life,—may depend on you,—on your family."

Mrs Wentworth appeared much shocked, and more so when he added the name of De Courcy. She spoke warmly of his merits, and of the sense which all her family entertained of them; and when Asgill again mentioned his dangerous state, she rose from her seat with emotion, and eagerly asked, What it was possible she could do to serve or to save him? Mr Asgill acquainted her with his attachment to her niece; and with scarce less zeal than if he had been pleading for himself, implored her influence as the only means of preserving his existence. Mrs Wentworth's countenance changed, and she resumed her seat.

"You must be sensible, sir," said she, "that it is impossible to give a direct an-

swer to such an application, even under the urgent circumstances which you state;—the extreme youth of the parties,—Mr Wentworth's absence at this moment,—my utter ignorance of the state of my niece's affections,—my confidence, indeed, that her affections have never yet been excited,—and a circumstance stronger than all, a circumstance that I trust will weigh with you, as it must with her uncle and me,—the marked difference of religious sentiment, the unalterable basis of conjugal unhappiness,—all these, sir, must at once preclude the possibility of my giving the answer you could wish, or that I," she added, yielding to the natural warmth of her feelings, "feeling as I do at this moment, could wish myself."

Mr Asgill took a good omen from her last words, and entering into an explanation of his religious sentiments, which were as Calvinistic as her own, endeavoured to persuade her that Charles only required an

union with such a family to adopt its sentiments; and he urged a topic from their mutual opinions, of the danger to which not only his life, but his spiritual state might be exposed, from an ill-timed obstinacy in rejecting a convert, whom Providence, as well as grace, appeared to have placed within their very reach. Mrs Wentworth saw the fallacy of this reasoning, though, in compassion to the feelings of the speaker, which she saw had more share in what he said than either his reason or his theology, she but slightly exposed it.

“If you, sir,” said she, mildly, “entertain those views of the gospel, which I am willing, from your language, to believe you do, you must be conscious that the power by which any one ‘believes unto salvation,’ is a power from above, and that the most promising natural means are ineffectual, unless directed by Him who causes ‘all things to work together for good to them that love him, and are called according to his purpose.’”

Believing this, as I trust you do, you surely cannot imagine that any human influence, however powerful, would be finally effectual in such a case. Nay, sir, may I not ask,—and forgive the question,—Is not so strong an attachment, as you represent your friend to be affected by towards an earthly object, almost a proof that God can have little share in the heart, when the imagination and the senses are so pre-occupied by a creature? Is not the altar, devoted to such a sacrifice, the very last (humanly speaking) which we could hope to be lit with the fire of the sanctuary, and blown with the breath of the seraphim?"

"Madam," said Asgill, "it is for us to use the means, not decide on the end."

Mrs Wentworth allowed this, and promised to mention the subject of their conversation in the most favourable manner to Mr Wentworth and her niece; and she even added, that of all the *unenlightened* young men she had seen, Charles appeared

to her the least likely to endanger the temporal happiness of his earthly partner. Mr Asgill, who felt that no more could be gained without risking all, was going away, when he paused for a moment to speak of Charles's ample fortune, and of the splendour in which his future wife might be maintained. He did not speak from his heart, for he despised wealth with all the uprightness of a conscientiously religious man, but he would not omit any topic that he thought might prove a plea in the cause of his client. As he looked up in Mrs Wentworth's face, he saw this plea availed nothing in the Court of Conscience. She calmly observed, that her niece was independent, and were she not, she trusted she could answer for her, that worlds would not bribe her to the alienation of her heart, or the prostitution of her conscience.

Mr Asgill then took his leave, and though nothing could be less hopeful than this interview, yet he persuaded himself, as soon as

he was out of the house, that Mrs Wentworth's expressions were much more favourable than they seemed to be ; and before he saw Charles again, he resolved to represent his visit as almost successful. Mr Wentworth came home shortly after, and his wife mentioned the subject of Mr Asgill's visit in terms the most qualifying she could think of, (for she felt an interest for Charles which her religious sentiments contended with, but could not overcome,) and she now felt herself reduced to act almost the same part with her husband that Asgill had lately acted with her. Wentworth instantly armed himself in "complete mail" of scriptural phraseology ; and he quoted sundry texts from the Epistle to the Corinthians, to prove that "to be unequally yoked together with unbelievers," was so diametrically opposite to the precepts of the gospel, that even to propose it was scarce less criminal than being guilty of the fact itself. His wife was prepared for this, and she was also prepared

with the arguments usually urged against it, which he had often heard; for the subject is much discussed among evangelical people, when the object of their inclinations, as sometimes happens, is not a convert to their creeds.

Mr Wentworth stood his ground impenetrable. Then she condescended even to call in the secular arm, and (incidentally) mentioned Charles's splendid prospects, and the temporal advantages that would accrue from the union; but before she could finish the sentence, her conscience checked her, and she suddenly stopped. But this argument, though urged with no strength, (for Mrs Wentworth was truly conscientious,) had more effect than she wished to be aware of on the hearer. Mr Wentworth instantly became silent; his worldly feelings recurred; but a moment after (like a man who mistakes the reverse of wrong for right) he assumed the look and tone of authority which weak

minds substitute for argument, and insisted upon hearing the subject mentioned no more. Mrs Wentworth had too much knowledge of her husband's character to oppose him on the spot ; she led him from it, but then dexterously led him back again, by representing (almost in the language of Mr Asgill) the strong human probability there was of Charles adopting the sentiments of the family of which he became a member ; and she tried to interest Mr Wentworth's religious views by the hope of a convert, and even to flatter his vanity by the prospect of his controversial powers being distinguished by facilitating that conversion.

In all this there was nothing of female art, and but little of earthly feeling ; Mrs Wentworth (whose heart was naturally warm) was strongly, though almost unconsciously, attached to Charles ; all her human feelings were on his side of the question ; and though she had maintained be-

fore Asgill the inviolate state of her niece's affections, her penetration had scarcely wanted the aid of his disclosure to discover that if Charles was really attached to Eva, any opposition he might meet with would not be aggravated at least by her insensibility. All her human feelings were engaged in the question; and it was so long since she had felt them, that their exercise now appeared an indulgence. Mr Wentworth, in answer, repeated his injunctions that the subject should never be mentioned again, while in the same breath he expressed his wish that the young man should visit at the house as formerly. His real motive for this concession was, his foreseeing a subject of endless controversy in the conversion of Charles, (and controversy he delighted in,) but this motive he took care to conceal from his wife, and they parted mutually satisfied; she with having gained his permission that Charles should

be admitted as a convertend, and he with the prospect of exercising his talents, and displaying his importance.

Mrs Wentworth then went to Eva, and Asgill himself never felt more agitation as he stood in doubt at her door a few hours past, than she felt when about to speak of a lover to her whose heart she had hitherto tried to fill with God alone. She paused at the door for many minutes, and then resolved to defer the disclosure till evening. Evening came, and Eva and she were alone; and she felt as all do who trust to delay for diminishing the difficulty of a task,—that it only increases it. At length she forced herself to speak; and such was her emotion, that she continued to speak, her eyes intently fixed on her work, and her shaking hands making no progress in it, without regarding the effect of her disclosure on her niece, till at its conclusion Eva threw herself at her feet in an agony of tears. Mrs Wentworth was shocked and

alarmed ; she forgot her feelings for Charles in her feelings for one far dearer ; she feared that she had been pleading for one who was indifferent to her ; and, in the tenderest language of confidence and conciliation, she implored her to believe that no influence would be exercised over her affections, and that she had with reluctance undertaken the office of pleading for one whom she now would never mention more. Eva wept still, and still did not venture to raise her head.

“ Why do you weep ? ” said Mrs Wentworth ; “ you shall be disturbed no more on this subject—let us forget it for ever.” Eva raised her head for a moment, but her thick locks had fallen over her eyes, and though their expression seemed to struggle through their shade, in the next moment her locked hands tried to conceal it. “ I see,” said her aunt, hastening to end the scene—“ I see he is indifferent to you—his name shall be heard no more.”

As she rose to go, Eva, still on her knees, detained her — Mrs Wentworth paused: “These tears,” said Eva, scarce audibly, “are not shed for indifference.”

CHAPTER V.

In religion I duly observe every form ;
With a heart to my country devoted and warm,
I give to the poor, and I lend to the rich.

Fakeer. But how many nails do you stick in your —— ?

It was in November when Charles and Eva first met, under circumstances so repulsive ; and it was in the beginning of spring that Charles was received as the acknowledged friend of the family, and the permitted lover of Eva. Guardians and friends (for neither of them had parents) had given consent to their union. The extreme youth of both parties had made them defer the period of that union for three years ; but, during that interval, they had youth, love, health, affluence, and beauty—

every flower that can brighten the desert of life glowed in their path, nor was there a single weed to darken their beauty, or to dull their fragrance.

To common eyes, Charles and Eva might have seemed to live like the first pair in Paradise,—the same beauty of form, the same sanctity of life, the same unison of heart. “They took sweet counsel together, and walked in the house of God as friends.” Was there any thing to disturb hearts that seemed above the vicissitudes of life, both from passion and fortune, that were linked by a tie “not of this world?”

They had much yet to encounter; for every day Mr Wentworth’s eagerness to make Charles a convert increased with its difficulty, and every day Mrs Wentworth’s fears increased, that the spiritual interest of both was sacrificed to the impulse under which she had espoused Charles’s cause, (and still remained his advocate, rather from habit and feeling, than from conscience;) and

Asgill, as the temporal interest of his pupil recurred to him, felt that, in his terror for Charles's life, he had perhaps compromised all that could render life valuable, by consenting to his union with a family who regarded him as little better than an infidel, and where the very object of his attachment seemed to tremble between the alternate claims of nature and grace, while she felt that the chosen of her heart was not the partaker of her faith, was not "the Elect of God." Even Charles himself, whose devotedness of heart made him regard the whole world as a shrine, where there was but one Deity, and but one worshipper, whose recovered health and reason seemed to be given him only to exhaust in gazing on her for whom they were nearly lost, even he felt the persecution to which he was exposed from the principles and habits of the family, and its intimates, at times almost beyond the patience of a lover. Every morning, though a constant

visitor, he felt like a stranger to himself and those around him ; the house was filled with religious persons of various denominations ; all met for the purpose of controversy or devotion, or both ; and, after the protracted and luxurious breakfast, the signal for battle was generally given by some spiritual leader. Predestination or Perseverance sounded their tocsin in the ear of some jealous and startled Arminian, the conflict commenced, and they would talk,—“ Good gods, how they would talk ! ” —till their minds, inflamed with the fiercest passion, and their tongues on fire with the most terrible anathemas, and scarce hiding their abhorrence of persons under a denunciation of principles almost dooming each other to eternal torment, while they affected to supplicate the Divine Mercy on the professors of imputed error, on another signal given, they would sink on their knees together, but still continue the warfare under the shelter of an address to the Deity,

by appealing to him for the defence of his own truth, and imploring him, with that kind of charitable malignity peculiar to religious people, to turn their erring brethren from darkness to light, to give them the "heart of flesh for the heart of stone," &c. &c. &c. Such was the morning, and such was the evening too ; and the evening and the morning that made the first day, made every other also.

Eva, though she never joined in controversy, listened to it with profound habitual attention, and joined in the prayers with earnest devotion. Charles was sometimes amazed, and sometimes provoked, by the attentive patience with which she hung on lips that seemed to him to utter incomprehensible jargon, or daring profanation, while his own eager vigilance of looks was scarcely rewarded by a glance, for which Eva seemed to reproach herself, as if it was stolen from heaven ; yet, like the patriarch, he felt (when that glance was directed to

him,) that the time " he served for her was but as a moment." The constant warfare carried on in his hearing, would have been more supportable if he were not almost constantly the object of it himself, for, from the moment of his becoming an intimate in the family, the whole evangelical party had set themselves for life and death to convert him.

Though these people decry worldly power and influence in their operation to facilitate the diffusion of the gospel, and repeat often, that " not many wise, not many mighty," &c. &c., yet still they grasp at the aid and authority that worldly influence can give; and when they have obtained it, they triumphantly quote from Isaiah, " That kings shall be their nursing fathers, and queens their nursing mothers," &c. &c. Charles's large fortune, his talents, his avowed devotion to an evangelical female, and the suavity of his manners, which they mistook for docile ignorance, promised a fair

subject for conversion, or at least for controversy. Charles at first yielded from timidity, or answered from complaisance, but at length found himself, by the pertinacity of the disputants, inextricably involved in the mazes of controversy. Every hour he was called on to discuss or to decide on points above human comprehension; he was pressed with importunities about his spiritual state, which was represented to depend on his adopting the separate creed of every individual speaker, with all its divisions and subdivisions, and shades of difference, that seemed to him to give to airy nothing "a local habitation, and a name." And he was warned, in language that disgusted him more by its grossness, than it terrified him by its violence, not to dare to unite himself on earth with one, with whom he never could be united in eternity, unless he seduced her into that path of perdition in which he was advancing himself, without hope of retreat or return. From this per-

secution he was sometimes freed by the influence of Mrs Wentworth, whose influence never failed, even amid the rage of controversy, and sometimes by the fears of Wentworth, that he might lose his convert by the violence of the means employed to secure him ; but in these moments of respite, when he turned to Eva for relief, he found not the relief he expected.

Her feelings were as deeply, though not as vehemently, engaged in the cause as those of the controversialists ; and the silence which her youth, her sex, and her timidity imposed on her, and the deeper interest she felt in the conversion of Charles, made her listen with that anxious attention to the debate, which Charles constantly mistook for indifference to him ; and even when released from this, the purity of Eva's manners, the primitiveness of her mind, and her equal inexperience of life and of passion, forbid those furtive but exquisite indulgences, by which love can alone subsist in

the midst of constraint, disturbance, and opposition. They had never loved like lovers ; for months he had now been the inmate of the family, yet never had he dared to avow his feelings, nor ever had Eva ventured, by glance or word, to tempt or reward the avowal ; if he raised his eyes to hers, they were withdrawn ; if he touched her hand, the shrinking of her diffidence seemed like the shudder of reluctance to him ; nor could he see the look with which she dared only to follow his parting steps ; nor could he hear the sigh which she never breathed, till the ear for which it was meant could hear it no longer. Sometimes, very rarely, they were accidentally left alone ; and those moments Charles felt the most painful of all. The subject that trembled on the lips of both, was the last those lips could be brought to utter ; the timidity of a young and delicate female may give confidence to men accustomed to the female world, but it communicates itself to

a youth scarce older than herself, and who knows in the female world but one object ; and they had no common subject to unite them, or to lead to another.

The only subject on which Eva could speak, was that exhausted already by every other speaker ; she had read no books, but those of Calvinistic theology, and though her remarks on the occasional passages of brilliant eloquence in those, or of poetical enthusiasm in the hymns, shewed gleams of mind that he would have caught and pursued like the pillar of fire in his wilderness, yet in a moment that light was again extinguished, and the cloud resumed its place. She could speak but of the books she had read ; those were few, and the habits of her life reared an impenetrable barrier against her acquaintance with others. To her, one book, her Bible, seemed to contain the substance of all others ; all other prose was futile, all other poetry falsehood. Sometimes, to escape from what is actually the

most exquisite torture to those who love, (the presence of the object, when we feel or fear we have no power of interesting it) he solicited her to sing for him; she complied, (for she too felt his presence a burthen insupportable from feelings that appeared to her almost guilty, and wholly inexpressible) —but she knew nothing but hymns; and the solemnity of her manner, only animated by a warmth that was borrowed from the *subject*, not from the *hearer*, chilled into reverential silence every feeling those lovely lips, (and the sound that thrilled through them, like the breeze opening the cup of a rose-bud,) would have excited:

How could he ask from lips that had but just uttered the name of their God, and expressed an exclusive devotion to his glory, an avowal of love to a creature? how could he expect that eyes exalted to heaven in the rapture of devotion, would turn to glance on a being, whose trembling adora-

tion must at that moment have appeared almost impiety? If he spoke, would he be listened to?—If he knelt, would it not be termed profanation?—There was but one pursuit in which their tastes united, and in which Eva seemed to feel it not a crime to solicit sometimes his aid, and sometimes even his approbation.

She drew exquisitely, and her talents had been highly cultivated; for Mr Wentworth knew that this was the only talent that could not be paraded in society, and no expence had been spared to render her execution equal to her taste. But even this pursuit received a strong tinge from the peculiarity of her habits and manners. Undraped figures, or figures in wet (or no) drapery, and the anatomy of the human figure, and those subjects which some young ladies delight to study, under the pretence of proficiency in the art, Eva would not have looked at. Her landscapes were

beautiful, and she delighted in drawing flowers.

Charles had one evening procured some beautiful exotics, and he hastened to Dominick-street with them. Mrs Wentworth and Eva were at the house of a friend about a mile from Dublin, where he had the privilege of following them. The drawing-room was empty when he arrived; but in a greenhouse off the stair-case Eva was seated drawing; he spread the flowers before her, and their hues and their fragrance seemed pale and faint to the glow of delighted surprise that tinged her beautiful cheek, and the odorous breath that for a moment mingled with his as they bent over the flowers together. She selected some Provence roses from them, and began to copy them in a wreath she was painting. As she leant over them, a long lock of her lovely hair fell over the paper—Charles removed it unrepelled; his trembling fingers lingered for a moment on her white neck; Eva felt it

but did not dare to shew she felt it. Charles bent over the drawing ; she felt his burning breath on her cheek, till the heat seemed communicated to it ; she heard his shortened respiration, and the tremor of his hand, as it touched her chair, made her own falter. She knew not why she was disturbed, yet dreaded to know more. She rose, and saying something indistinctly of the warmth of the evening, walked to an open glass-door near her. Charles followed silently ; it was a lovely evening ; the glow of a brilliant horizon, and the rich expanded scenery of the Bay of Dublin, burst on their view as they stood together.

The heart of Eva seemed softening, and the humid radiance of her eyes had all the softness and all the azure of the heaven to which they were raised. Charles ventured to touch the hand that lay half concealed among the roses that clustered round the window ; it was not withdrawn ; he ventured to press it,—it trembled, but remained

in his ; almost doubtful of his happiness, he raised his eyes, swimming in delicious dew, to hers ; they were cast down, but not averted. Intoxicated with delight, he ventured to touch her fingers with his burning lips ; Eva withdrew them, and the look of tender reproach, that seemed to complain of a broken, though tacit confidence, made him feel a danger that till that moment had never entered the imagination of either.

* * * * *

“ What a lovely evening,” said Charles, his faltering respiration scarce making the sentence audible.

“ It is most lovely,” said Eva ; “ and oh ! what a richness it gives to this lovely scenery to think, ‘ my Father made all this ! ’ ”

“ And may not a thought of the creature be mingled without impiety amid the feel

ings such a scene inspires?" said Charles. "May not one human sigh be heaved, and be forgiven? Oh! Eva," he uttered wildly, "be less lovely, less pure, less cherub-innocent, or bid me not think of heaven while I can behold you!"

Eva shrunk from him, no less alarmed by his wildness, than revolted by his language; and though she could not speak, the calm rebuke of her look, "severe in youthful beauty," dispelled the delirium of the intoxicated boy, and drove him in a moment to the wildest extreme of penitent humiliation.

"Oh! pardon me—but you will not pardon me, Eva—I have offended your feelings—I have offended your God. In vain I solicit you for pardon, which you cannot grant, because you cannot feel—you cannot love—love, as I do, with a heart broken, a brain distracted, an existence trembling on the verge of the grave before I dared to speak. Such love is profanation

in your ears—yet such I have felt to the risk of my very life—such I feel—such I avow at this moment at a greater risk—your displeasure. Eva, pity me, if you can, for you can never love as I do.”

As he spoke, his burning tears fell fast upon the hand he held, but which, though it trembled, no longer struggled in his grasp. The sublimity of religious feeling made Eva at that moment feel a strength far above the frantic energy that supported Charles; her youthful timidity, her habitual reserve, her maiden sanctity of feeling, all yielded to the spirit that upbore her, as, still holding his damp and trembling hand, she pointed to heaven, and exclaimed, “*I cannot love!—look there, and see how I can love—as one who hopes to meet the beloved of her soul there.*”

She bent towards him as she spoke, and the first pledge of love was received by Charles with a feeling far different from

that with which it was communicated ; by him with the maddening enthusiasm of earthly passion ; by her with the feeling of a seal to an eternal union.

CHAPTER VII.

——“ Susan was piously given,
And the worst of it was, we could never agree
'Bout the road that was shortest to heaven.”

MOORE.

CHARLES, at the commencement of the conversation, felt as if he had irreversibly offended, yet, at its conclusion, he felt relieved from a burthen insupportable. It is certain that an explanation is necessary between those who have a sentiment of any description for each other, and that should it develope even very opposite feelings between them, it is a relief to have avowed them. Convinced that Eva felt for him all she could feel for mortal, the ardour of his own feelings suggested to him the hope

that he might communicate it to hers, and inspire her with that passion which he felt himself, but which, wanting in enthusiasm in her, seemed to him to be wanting in return. A sigh, a look, a touch, that thrills to the heart, is enough in the infancy of love; but the passion soon becomes importunate, and the heart that feels defrauded of its expected return, could exclaim with Lear—"I gave you all!"

After this interview he ventured to oppose Eva's opinions and habits, and to infuse some portion of his own feelings into hers. They never could agree about the term "passion." With Charles it was something which, though he could speak of with inspiration, he could never define, and though he could feel to madness, he could never express; with Eva it was the hope of life being brightened by a partner who would aid her steps, and fix her eye in her progress to eternity. Both of them were perhaps disappointed in the object

they had selected for their respective feelings, but both were only inspired with greater solicitude for their mutual conversion. Like all disputants, too, each of them lost ground by maintaining their own side of the argument; and, like most disputants, each of them was glad to retreat to any auxiliary subject as a resource. Charles, passionately fond of music, and to whom all music was comprised in her voice, often implored her for a *mortal* song; and he was amazed how any one who decried human poetry as the idle sport of an intoxicated imagination, could apply, without hesitation, the warmest language of human passion, (which so often occurs in the evangelical hymns,) to the expression of human passion, and address the Deity in such lines as these:—

“ How tedious and tasteless the hours,
When Jesus no longer I see;
Sweet prospects, sweet birds, and sweet flowers,
No longer have charms for me.”

And he had heard her speak with pleasure of "Watts' poetry," with which she was too well acquainted not to know that such is the style in which he describes the death of Moses :—

" Gently his fainting head he laid
Upon his Maker's breast ;
His Maker kist his soul away," &c.

And such are the lines in which he mingles his aspirations after divine love, with a kind of amorous pastoral feeling almost unintelligible, and wholly unsuitable—

" I'll carve thy name on every bark,
And every wounded tree
Shall drop and bear some mystic mark
That Jesus died for me."

Such was the poetry to which ears and lips were accustomed that closed with horror against the efforts of imagination, or the aspirations of passion, or even the voice of music, unless combined with the language

of an evangelical hymn. He urged this inconsistency on Eva, and ventured to ask her, by what unction of impunity the lips of evangelical females were armed, that enabled them to apply such expressions to objects wholly unsuitable, while they would shudder to address them to those to whom nature and passion seemed to appropriate them? Eva could only answer him in the language of habit, and of habit the language has no power, except to those who are under its influence; yet the purity of her sentiments was a silent pleader for her, and though Charles was wearied with the monotony to which her exquisite voice was confined, he would have shrunk with horror from hearing her sing one of the airs that modern females are accustomed to sing.

They differed on almost every other subject, but to Charles even this opposition had a charm; for what would have been mere obstinacy in any other female, had in

her the attraction of a virtue. It was not for opinion, but for principle, she contended, and she made this so plain, yet with such modesty, she bore her faculties in controversy so meekly, that Charles experienced more than the pleasure of victory in defeat; yet he felt that this perpetual conflict of opinions and habits was no happy prelude to domestic union.

One evening he brought her some flowers to copy, and shewed her at the same time a beautiful sketch of the ruins of Athens, which he had himself taken that day from a volume in the College Library. Eva looked at the architecture slightly, though she well understood its principles, and felt the beauty of its modulation, but immediately began to copy the flowers. Charles looked on with surprise and disappointment; Eva observed it, and after a long silence, (for, unused to speak, and fearful to offend, her simplest observations were preceded by silence,) at last she said,—“*These*

are the work of God, *this* is the work of man. There is but one image that I would wish to be ever present to my thoughts, and even the humblest of His works revives it."

"And is there but *one* image, Eva," said Charles, mournfully, yet daring, though unconsciously, to be jealous of the Deity, "that you would wish to be present to your thoughts?"

"I need not *wish*," said Eva, scarce articulately, and bending over the flowers, "for the other;" and then feeling she had said too much, she hurried to add,—“These pillars remind me of nothing but man's efforts to immortalize a temporal existence; to tell the living, in the voice of vanity, that man has been;—but these flowers will be renewed as long as existence can continue, and are scattered on the grave as a memorial of a life sometimes beautiful, but always transitory, as them."

"And does nature, then," said Charles,

“only speak to remind us of the infelicity and short duration of life? Why should we not then turn to those brilliant monuments that dignify existence, and give immortality on this side of the tomb? Flowers may fade, but the memory of genius survives many flowers, even the laurel that is strewn on its grave.”

“I love these flowers,” said Eva, answering her own thoughts, not those of Charles; “God made the country, but man made the town.”

* * * * *

Charles thought he had got very far when he had led Eva to quote poetry, and “on that hint he spake.” It was in vain. Beyond Cowper, the evangelical poet, she knew nothing, and would know nothing; and such was the tranquil purity of her

mind, such was "the sober certainty of waking bliss," with which she seemed to fill the narrow sphere of her enjoyment, that Charles felt it almost a crime to try to familiarise her with works of imagination and passion, to communicate to her "the sweet madness" with which she had inspired him. At times he felt it was like the attempt of Milton's Satan to introduce into the pure region of heaven "strange fire, his own invented torment." Still he urged her to read poetry, for he felt as if it might plead for him,—as if its impassioned language could convey to her what he could not utter.

One evening he had succeeded in prevailing on her to listen to "The Lay of the Last Minstrel;" she was struck by the introduction, and Charles was proceeding with that increasing confidence which the increasing interest of a listener gives a reader, when the clock struck, and she reminded him it was time to go to the evening lec-

ture at Bethesda Chapel. Charles, with a sigh, threw aside the poem, and accompanied her. The sermon was eloquent and long, the congregation profoundly attentive; Charles sate abstracted and listless. As they returned, the lovely calmness of a vernal night revived the feelings of Charles; and as Eva leaned on his arm, and sometimes raised her looks (but with other feelings than his) to the bright blue spangled sky, that exquisite passage broke involuntarily from his lips, that ends with, "for lovers love the western star."

Eva started, started with actual terror; she felt the name or language of love like a profanation of the moment, and told him that she was trying to recollect the substance of the sermon she had just heard, and impress it on her memory. Charles was silent; and silently accompanied her home, where nothing but the sermon was spoken of, and every division and subdivision of theological subtlety was run on

it to exhaust the hour that must intervene till the bell was rung for the servants to attend the family devotions, and a long extempore prayer from Mr Wentworth concluded the night.

The following evening, Charles had succeeded, almost beyond his hopes, in engaging both Mrs Wentworth and Eva in Burns' "Cotter's Saturday Night," when an evangelical female friend hurried in with the intelligence of a distinguished preacher of the gospel, who was "to give the word of exhortation" in the meeting-house at York-street that evening. Pelisses and bonnets were instantly in requisition, and Charles, spell-bound, followed. The discourse was every thing that could be expected from a man well versed in Calvinistic theology, expert from habit in extempore speaking, confident of his audience, and still more confident of himself. Eva listened with deep and unaffected attention; and her eye, fixed on the preacher during a dis-

course of an hour and forty minutes, could not spare one glance to him whose eye was fixed only on her, till, at the conclusion, she turned to him with a look that spoke triumph in the eloquence of the preacher. His eyes, fixed on her with a far different expression, struck and almost terrified her. Those burning glances she had encountered before, and felt distressed and perplexed when they were turned on her; but here their expression was so different from that of the feelings with which she was trying to fill her heart, and hoping to communicate to his, that it was in vain she attempted to shrink from a painful consciousness of their meaning. The place appeared to become a silent interpreter between her and him; she felt it as forbidding her not only to meet those looks, but even to scrutinize the state of her feelings. Every object around her murmured to the mind's ear, "Let God be all in all." She knelt to join in the silent prayer in which

the congregation were united at the close of the sermon, but those looks followed her still. Her heart was at war with itself, and some tears struggled through her fingers as she pressed them on her closed eyes, but felt she could not shut his image out.

“ I think too much of him,” she said to herself, and she shuddered at finding those words had mingled themselves among her prayers. Memory, with a busy, backward glance, led her to Bethesda Chapel, where his sight had first caused her to wander in her prayers. She compared the present agitation of her heart with the tideless calm she had felt before she knew him ; and to those who have experienced a calm that is the result of religion, any disturbance of it appears like a crime. The novelty of the agency makes them suspect the agent. “ I love him too much,” she murmured to herself. And when they were retiring, she felt some reluctance at the arrangement made by Mrs Wentworth, who took her

friend's arm, and consigned Eva to the care of De Courcy. Their intelligence was now becoming so intuitive, that De Courcy felt he had offended her, though he knew not how ; he recollected, however, that she was in the habit, on quitting a place of devotion, to endeavour to impress on her memory the substance of the sermon she had been listening to. He paused, till he could pause no longer.

“ Why are you so silent, Eva ? ”

“ I was thinking of that fine text.”

“ What was it ? ”

“ What was it ? ” said Eva, almost relinquishing his arm, from a feeling stronger and more unpleasant than surprise, for she had no idea of any one forgetting the text so soon.

“ I have a bad memory—or a bad headache,” said De Courcy, trying to smile away her amazement—“ or, perhaps, I would rather hear it from your lips than those of that dark-browed sallow man.”

"It is little matter," said Eva, "from what lips we hear the truth. The text was, 'God is Love.'"

"Oh, Eva!" said De Courcy, under an impulse he could not resist, "do we require any thing more than this dark-blue sky, this balmy air, those lovely stars that glitter like islands of light in an immeasurable ocean, and point out our destination amid its bright and boundless infinity, to tell us that 'God is Love?' Why must we learn it in the close and heated air of a conventicle, with all its repulsive accompaniments of gloomy looks, sombre habits, dim lights, nasal hymns? Are these the interpreters the Deity employs as the intimations of his love?"

"They are," said Eva, awakened to an answer, but never thus awakened for more than a moment—"they are. For to the poor the gospel is preached, and they seldom feel any thing of the atmosphere but its inclemency,—to the sick, and they can-

not encounter it,—to the unhappy, and they cannot enjoy it.”

De Courcy was silent ; for what can be replied to truth ? But at the moment he felt, as the guests at the ancient Egyptian banquets may be supposed to have felt, when the death's head was served up at the table to remind them of mortality, just when they wished to forget it—he felt, if the truth must be told, that he wished her less religious at that moment. They arrived in Dominick Street ; Mrs Wentworth stood for some time at the door talking to her friend, Eva and De Courcy were at a little distance. The hand that hung on his arm had gradually sunk. Eva was unconscious of this motion, which was merely an intimation that they were parting. De Courcy was not, for the hand came gradually in contact with his. He touched it as a signal of reconciliation ; and small as his was, even to feminine delicacy, hers was soon contained even in his. Eva disen-

gaged and attempted to raise it, to point to a brilliant star on which she believed De Courcy's eyes were fastened as much as her own. De Courcy's eyes were fixed indeed, not on the star, but on her hand, and as she raised it, his lips were fastened on it too. She struggled to withdraw it; the difference between their feelings seemed to be striking her every moment more and more. As she extricated it, she looked on him with as much reproach as her eyes had the power of expressing; but that was very little. His flushed cheek, and ardent eyes, met her glance; their beauty had something terrific to her. She knew not what he felt, but she knew he did not feel like her.

Mrs Wentworth descended the steps to press him to join their family supper. The head-ache, of which he had complained on quitting the meeting-house, was becoming intolerably painful, he pressed his hand on

his burning forehead, and declined her invitation.

“Wanderer,” said Mrs Wentworth, “and where did you earn that head-ache?”

“At a billiard-table, last night after I left you,” said De Courcy ; repentance, sincerity, and something like anger, producing the confession. Mrs Wentworth hastily retreated up the steps.

“What is a billiard-table?” said Eva, following her.

“It is something better than a conventicle,” said De Courcy, as he turned from the door.

CHAPTER VIII.

Wretch that thou art; an elder cried; and gone
For everlasting. Go thyself, said John ;—
Depart this instant, let me hear no more.

CRABBE.

THE Wentworths had long known that De Courcy was not one of them, or, in their own language, that he was “ of the world ;” but they tried to conceal what they knew both from each other and from themselves, if possible, though from very different motives ; Wentworth, because not even his attachment to Calvinism exceeded his due appreciation of De Courcy’s L.3,000 a-year, and Mrs Wentworth from compassion for Eva, and from a hope, which was, however, growing fainter every day, of his finally adopting the religious sentiments of the fa-

mily. It is certain, from the facility of De Courcy's temper, and his enthusiastic passion for Eva, he would have become a ready and docile catechumen; but the rigour of Wentworth's family-discipline, and the repulsiveness of the instrument on whose operations they chiefly relied for his conversion, were the principal means of obstructing it. This instrument was Macowen, whom De Courcy, who had discovered his worldliness, sensuality, pride, and virulence of temper, hated with an hatred passing that of swadlers. The increasing difference between his habits and those of the family was growing thus more obvious every day, and he was even at less pains to conceal it; he opposed Mr Wentworth's dogmatising, and even ventured to question some of his opinions, to which he had formerly listened with respectful silence.

When Wentworth was announcing with triumph the happy evening he was to spend in company with a Socinian, a Catholic, an

Arian, and an Arminian Methodist, who were assembled for the purpose of being exposed for the whole night to the battery of a dozen resolute Calvinists, De Courcy could not help asking, If he looked forward with pleasure to such an evening? while his own look and tone announced that he would have awaited it in horror.

"Unquestionably," said Mr Wentworth—"Oh it will be a precious time—a time of refreshing for the soul.—The enemies of the Lord shall then be found liars!"

"And is it possible, sir, you can find pleasure in such a clash of creeds, tenets, and tempers?—Why, the Synod of Dordrecht itself will be a Quakers' meeting to such a Babel."

"~~Without controversy,~~" said Mr Wentworth, "*great is the mystery of godliness.*"*

* This glaring misconstruction of a well-known text I have not in print in the work of an American controversialist. I have introduced it as a ~~hint~~ to those who

And, satisfied with this apposite and conclusive quotation, he was retiring, when an exclamation from De Courcy struck on his quick ear, as an invitation to prolong the dispute, and he turned instantly.

De Courcy's exclamation was extorted by a different cause ; he had taken up a newspaper that lay on the table, and read aloud, with vivid and heedless delight, the announcement of the arrival of the celebrated Madame Dalmatiani, first singer at all the continental operas, and first tragic actress in Europe, who, by the unprecedented liberality of the manager, (relying on a generous public,) had been engaged on enormous terms to perform a few nights at the Dublin theatre, the last she was ever to appear on. Little did the generous public,

are ignorant of the original language, to be careful how they lay their hands on the text. The writer above alluded to quotes it as a testimony in favour of the necessity of controversy.

or the manager either, know of Madame Dalmatiani's motive for visiting Ireland. De Courcy had heard of this extraordinary woman from men who had been abroad; according to their various descriptions, she was a Siddons, a Catalani, a Gabrielli, a La Tiranna, with all the terrible Medea-graces of Cumberland's description. She was all the muses, and all the graces embodied, in the beautiful slender form of a female about 20; but the talent that excited most wonder was her perfect knowledge of the English language and literature, and her marked preference of the characters of English tragedy, which she played alternately with those of the Italian opera. De Courcy poured out all he knew or heard of her as a kind of comment on the paragraph which he had read; and in his new-kindled enthusiasm forgot every thing but her of whom he was speaking.

Mr Wentworth had kept silence even from good words, though it was pain and

grief to him ; but when he heard De Courcy, by way of climax, announce his intention of visiting the theatre every evening during her stay, the smothered flame burst forth with the fury of a volcano. He had been provoked by De Courcy's strictures on the controversial party, and this was a fine opportunity for venting it ;—on he went triumphantly, and every histrio-matrix, from Tertullian down to Prynn and Collier, might have been raised from the dead with joy. He cursed stages, stage-plays, stage-players, frequenters and abettors, from Thespis down to Mr Harris and the committee of Drury-Lane, lamp-lighters, scene-shifters, and candle-snuffers inclusive, not forgetting a by-blow at De Courcy for visiting those *tents of Kedar*.

“ What is a theatre ? ” said he ; “ a place where the name of the Deity is never heard but in execration or blasphemy ; where, contrary to the commandment of the Lord, (see Deuteronomy, chap. xxii. ver. 5.) the

women wear mens' garments, and the men the womens'; and where Satan gains so many souls for five pieces of silver a night, that I suppose he now repents of his prodigality in giving thirty for that of Judas."

De Courcy bowed before the storm while it raged, and replied, by a simple repetition of his intention to visit the theatre every night Madame Dalmatiani performed; he then retired. Mr Wentworth knew not where to vent his highly-raised wrath, so he turned on Eva.

"And this is the chosen partner of your life!—these be thy gods, oh Israel!—A clog upon the wheels of your soul, to drag them back into perdition. I should not be surprised if one day he had the confidence to propose your visiting that temple of Satan along with himself; but first I would see you visit your grave."

"And are all plays, then, so wicked?" said Eva.

"I know nothing at all about them,"

said Mr Wentworth. " I thank Heaven I never read one of them, and trust in *his* grace I never shall."

CHAPTER IX.

Qualis in Eurotæ ripis, aut per juga Cynthi
Exercet Diana choro——

——Deas supereminet omnes.

VIRGIL.

ALL the next day, Eva said to herself, "He will not go to the theatre;" but it was observed that every moment that day she was taking up the newspapers, and examining the column in which the play for that night was announced, and Madame Dalmatian's name, in broad and attractive capitals, blazed in the van. She read and sighed, then laid it down, and read it again. Charles did not go to Dominick-Street all that day.

Sir Richard Longwood was nominated one of Charles's guardians, but he was mere-

ly a nominal guardian. He had asked his ward once or twice to dinner since his arrival, and the invitation had been complied with, just as it was given, in form. But the very night before, Sir Richard had said to Lady Longwood, as the servants were putting out the candles after a supper party, "Why was not De Courcy here to-night?"

"I don't know," said Lady Longwood; "I believe he had a card—he never comes here now,—you know he is going to marry a methodist?"

"A methodist! Lady Longwood; a young man of his property married to a methodist! Lady Longwood, I tell you, you do not look into these things—it would be no bad look-out for Honoria or Caroline."

On that hint Lady Longwood did not speak; but she wrote a polite note, with the best crow-quill in her writing-desk, which was left next day at Charles's rooms,

requesting the pleasure of his company to a family dinner, and offering him a seat in her box to see the celebrated Dalmatiani, who had been particularly recommended to her during her residence in Dublin.

Charles, who had determined to go, accepted the invitation. A singular circumstance occurred that day; as Charles was going to Merrion-Square, where the Longwoods lived, he met a Mr Cole, a neighbour of his guardian, Mr Asgill's. They shook hands—"Well, my young friend," said Mr Cole, "I hear you are going to be married,—and that you are to commence bridegroom before you commence bachelor, academically speaking."

Charles blushed and hesitated.

"Pray, may I ask the goddess's name, if a goddess can be supposed to have a Christian name?" said Cole.

"Her name is Eva Wentworth," said Charles.

“ Any relation of Wentworth’s of Abbey-Street, who was in business with my uncle till he turned evangelical ?”

“ A niece,” said Charles.

“ Niece !” repeated Cole ; “ niece !—Impossible. Wentworth had only a sister, who died unmarried, and Mrs Wentworth never had brother or sister—You must be mistaken, Charles ?”

Charles could only repeat that she was said to be Mr Wentworth’s niece ; but when, after Cole’s repeated assurances that it was not possible she could stand in that relation to him, he felt it impossible to refute it, they parted with an impression of uneasiness on Charles’s mind that he could not account for, and would not examine.

The bustle at Merrion-Square soon left him little leisure to think further ; a large party was assembled at dinner, and no tongue could utter any sound but Dalma-

tian's name. Those who knew nothing at all about music, spoke of nothing but her compass, science, and volubility ; and those who knew just as little of literature, were still louder about an Italian actress being able to understand Shakspeare, though there was not a character in Shakspeare she had undertaken to act ; and Honoria and Caroline, judiciously placed on each side of Charles, bored him with questions about Italian music and the English drama, and finally (instructed by their governess) asked him which he liked best, Metastasio or Shakspeare ? Charles tried to evade the question by pointing out the difference between a writer of musical dramas, and the creator of the English stage.

“ Oh ! ” said Miss Longwood, “ but does not Ophelia sing in Shakspeare ; and did not Shakspeare set the songs for her ? ”

“ Oh yes,” said Miss Caroline, proud of superior literature ; “ but then Ophelia was mad, you know, and Shakspeare, or *any*

gentleman, would do as much for any girl 'erased in care, or crossed in hopeless love.' " These words were scarcely uttered, when the coffee was brought in, and the carriages announced, and the whole party set off for the theatre, mad with the rage of patronizing, and giving their vanity all the credit of liberality and taste.

The performance on this night was a succession of scenes from the most distinguished Italian operas. The house was crowded, and the overture just over as they entered. A brilliant audience, lights, music, and the murmur of delighted expectation, prepared Charles for a far different object from Eva. What a contrast in the very introduction, between the dark habits, pale lights, solemn music, and awful language of a conventicle, and the gaiety and splendour of a theatre! He felt already disposed to look with delight on one who was so brightly harbingered, though it was amid a scene so different his first impressions of passion had

been received and felt. The curtain rose, and a few moments after Madame Delmatiani entered : She rushed so rapidly on the stage, and burst with such an overwhelming cataract of sound on the ear, in a bravura that seemed composed apparently not to task, but to defy the human voice, that all eyes were dazzled, and all ears stunned ; and several minutes elapsed before a thunder of applause testified the astonishment from which the audience appeared scarcely then to respire. She was in the character of a princess, alternately reproaching and supplicating a tyrant for the fate of her lover ; and such was her perfect self-possession, or rather the force with which she entered into the character, that she no more noticed the applauses that thundered round her, than if she had been the individual she represented ; and such was the illusion of her figure, her costume, her voice, and her attitudes, that in a few moments the inspiration with which she was agitated was

communicated to every spectator. The sublime and sculpture-like perfection of her form,—the classical, yet unstudied undulation of her attitudes, almost conveying the idea of a sybil or a prophetess under the force of ancient inspiration,—the resplendent and almost overpowering lustre of her beauty, her sun-like eyes, her snowy arms, her drapery blazing with diamonds, yet falling round her figure in folds as light as if the zephyrs had flung it there, and delighted to sport among its wavings; her imperial loveliness, at once attractive and commanding, and her voice developing all that nature could give, or art could teach, maddening the ignorant with the discovery of a new sense, and daring the scientific beyond the bounds of expectation or of experience, mocking their amazement, and leaving the ear breathless—All these burst at once on Charles, whose heart, and senses, and mind, reeled in intoxication, and felt pleasure annihilated by its own excess.

The performance went on; applauses were doubled and redoubled at every re-appearance of the enchantress. Charles gazed on without speech or plaudits, like one "blasted with excess of light." The house seemed coming down at the end of every song. Charles heard nothing but the song. He looked round, and wondered that the applause was louder than his own silent sigh. Excess of any feeling deprives us of all power of expressing it. To a *spectator*, Charles must have appeared the only indifferent person there; of all there, an *observer* would have seen he was the least so.

It was for the last scene she had reserved her powers,—those astonishing powers that could blend the most exquisite tones of melody with the fiercest agitations of passion, that could delight the ear, while they shook the soul. She came forward, after having stabbed the tyrant to avenge the fate of her lover. Her dress was deranged,—her long black hair floated on her shoul-

ders,—the flowers and diamonds that bound it were flung back, and her bare arms, her dark fixed eyes, the unconscious look with which she grasped the dagger, and the unfelt motion with which from time to time she raised her hand to wipe off the trace of blood from her pale forehead, made the spectators almost tremble for the next victim of one who seemed armed with the beauty, the passions, and the terrors of an avenging goddess. Applauds that shook the house had marked every scene but the last. When the curtain dropt, a dead silence pervaded the whole theatre, and a deep sigh proclaimed relief from oppression no longer supportable.

The Miss Longwoods were the first to recover the use of speech for Charles's torment, and they eagerly began to express their fears of her intention to commit real murder, and to congratulate each other on their safety in being so far from the stage. "They would not for the world

have been in the stage-box—Would he?”—Two or three ladies fainting in the stage-boxes luckily gave their curiosity and their alarm another direction, and they were in eager debate in one moment whether one of the fainting ladies was in a pink or a white satin spenser, and wishing for “God save the King,” that they might have an opportunity of standing up and displaying their long French shawls in drapery, when the box-door was opened, and a gentleman of Lady Longwood’s acquaintance entered, and announced that Madame Dalmatiani wished to pay her respects to Lady Longwood before she retired to a party where she was engaged to sup.

“Oh, delighted,” said Lady Longwood. “I shall be delighted to see Madame Dalmatiani!—Pray tell her I shall esteem it a particular favour.—Honoraria, Caroline, make room.—Mr De Courcy, she can sit between you and me.—Honoraria, you can speak Italian to her; at all events speak French, not

a word of English, or she will think you a *bete*. Take the copies of the opera out of your ridicules, and be reading as she comes in ; it will shew you understand it."

All this exhortation was lost on the Miss Longwoods. With staring eyes, and no small degree of terror in their faces, they continued gazing at the open door, through which they every moment expected to see Madame Dalmatiani enter, dagger, or, *perchance*, sword in hand, in all the terrors of her dying scene.

"Do you think she will come in with the real dagger in her hand? Do you think she will have that blood on her forehead? Was it real blood, or only paint?"

"Oh, no, it was only paint ; they could not afford real blood every night, and mamma says she is to act every night this week."

Charles stood with his eyes fixed on the door. Madame Dalmatiani entered, handed in by a musical nobleman, well known in Dublin ; and all her omnipotence of ta-

lent never could have produced such an effect on the minds of Lady Longwood and her daughters, as her being escorted by an earl. She advanced, and paid her respects to Lady Longwood in English; her language was at once elegant and polite, and not the slightest trace of a foreign accent perceptible, though her manner and attitude had all the foreign onction. Lady Longwood in vain tried to collect her habitual politeness to meet a woman whose claims in society appeared as high as her own, united with such extraordinary talents. She wished to parade as a patroness, and found herself no more than an equal; and as for the Miss Longwoods, not only Italian and French, but all English failed them;—they bowed and sat in timid awkwardness, consoling themselves by registering every item of her costume in their heart's-core, yea, in their heart of hearts. Madame Dalmatiani was instantly recognized by the house, and applauses loud and

long greeted her on the moment of her appearance in Lady Longwood's box. She rose, and, with the most attractive humility, bowed to every side ; her bending attitude—her hands pressed on her heart, seemed to bespeak her a suppliant for the forbearance of applause that oppressed her ; but the eye that flashed beneath the white downcast lid, and the long dark lashes that fringed it, spoke a suppressed consciousness of powers that could justify and enjoy the applauses of assembled worlds. It was when she sat down and turned herself to address Lady Longwood, that Charles could first behold her with undazzled eye ; she still wore her splendid dramatic costume, but to avoid notoriety, she had wrapt herself in a large French shawl, whose folds, if possible, augmented the grace of that figure no drapery could conceal. She had fastened up her long hair, and taken off the diamonds she wore on the stage, but the flowers were still twined through her dark

ringlets. Her bare arms were studiously kept within the thick folds of her shawl, and the simplicity and privacy of her figure made a delightful contrast to the terrible energy of attitude and passion that it had developed a moment before. She exerted herself to speak to Lady Longwood, though evidently fatigued with her late efforts ; and the sweetness, the gentleness, and even the timidity of her manner, were so powerfully contrasted with the tremendous and soul-searching powers she had lately displayed, that awe and admiration were rapidly exchanged for far different feelings. Her age appeared hardly twenty ; her beauty, though marked with the strong features of the continent, united all the charms of innocence with all the magic of intellect. As she turned to bow to some vapid praise of Lady Longwood's, Madame Dalmatiani's carriage was announced by a long train of servants at the door, and Lord — rose to offer her his hand ; she drew

her shawl round her, and bowed low to Lady Longwood. As she gave her hand to Lord —, she perceived she had dropt her diamond bracelet; Charles at the same moment took it up, and offered it. With the freedom of continental women, but consecrated by the simplicity of her manner, she bowed her silent thanks, and held out her white and beautiful arm while he fastened it on, though all the time she continued speaking to Lord —. Charles fastened it with a trembling hand; from that moment, Lady Longwood and her daughters talked incessantly, almost frantic with the vanity of having had Madame Dalmatiani in their box; they took care to make their triumph known by such extravagance of praise, so loudly uttered, that the attention of the whole house was fixed on their box, as they wished it to be.

How happy Lady Longwood would have been, had she heard the jealous hints of matrons and daughters less fortunate

than herself, on the glaring notoriety of her introducing an actress into her box just after her public performance, and known how those remarks were aggravated by the rich and handsome De Courcy being displayed by her daughters' side, as if to increase their triumph ! But Lady Longwood wanted nothing but her own positive feelings to set her almost mad with gratified vanity—the first performer in Europe visiting her box—the finest youth in Dublin seated between her daughters ;—how she talked, and how she triumphed !—fortunately for Charles, her volubility excluded the necessity of an answer, and prevented her observing that she had not the slightest share of his attention. Of all that she said he only retained the last words—“ You won't forget us to-morrow evening—Madame Dalmatiani has promised us her delightful society—We intend quite to domesticate her with us during her engage-

ment—A few literary friends—Just what she likes—She hates large parties—So do Honoria and Caroline—indeed, quite domestic—Caroline, why don't you take Mr De Courcy's arm?—But were not you delighted?—Oh, what an actress!"—

"Oh, what a woman!" sighed Charles.

All this time they were in the crowded lobby, and Lady Longwood purposely "won her way" slowly through the throng, loud and louder in her anticipated delights of the next evening, Honoria and Caroline echoing every word.—"Lady Longwood's carriage stops the way."—What welcome sounds to Charles! With an eagerness, alike mistaken by the party and the spectators, he escorted them to the carriage; the servant held down the step—"We have a place for you," said Lady Longwood, bending forward, in the softest tones of insinuation. "You'll sup in Merriion-Square?"—Charles did not hear her; he scarce knew

where he was ; the impatient footman dashed his flambeau against the wheels of the carriage, and called to the coachman to drive on ; Charles bowed his silent negative, and the carriage drove away.

CHAPTER X.

Musa refert, dedimus summam certaminis uni.

OVID,

THE day passed Charles scarce knew how ; he had hardly a conscious moment till he found himself at Lady Longwood's. A mixt sensation of danger and delight was over him, but he attended only to the latter.

Quite contrary to Lady Longwood's promise, her rooms were crowded ; her vanity was too great to suffer Madame Dalmatiani's presence at her parties to be unknown ; and when she had circulated it as a secret that she was to pass her even-

ing *en famille* in Merrion-Square, she made it the greatest of all possible compliments to admit her "dear five hundred friends" to see her, each on the individual assurance, that they were *favourites* so distinguished, flattering herself that she had secured popularity and fashion for her daughters, by the *eclat* of her first assembly.

Lady Longwood had been accustomed only to the usual routine of parties—youth in folly in one room, and old age at cards in another; but this night she tried to diffuse a more continental air over her party;—not a card-table to be seen, groupes in *attitudes* of conversation at least, chess-tables, volumes of engravings, hired for the night, and harps and pianos, occasionally *touched* by professors, to bring on their timid pupils, who sat down, and then, like Lady Heron, "could not, would not, durst not play." Every thing was arranged according to Lady Longwood's ideas of a foreign *conversazione*; there was only want-

ed mind and talent to give the meagre skeleton "life, and breath, and all things."

When Charles entered, Lady Longwood was gliding round the room, proud of a secret, and ten times more proud that *that* secret related to Madame Dalmatiani; and by this time the circle required some excitement; card-playing matrons were yawning, and exclaiming to each other, "How charming, oh how superior to the usual routine of Dublin parties!" Then whispering to every one near them, "Oh, what a bore! not a card-table—Will *that woman* sing to-night?—I'm so sorry I ordered the carriage away;" and the misses, three deep, leaning on their intended partners, and straining their white necks, "But will there be no dancing?—And it is all to depend on Madame Dalmatiani?—Sure one could hear her at the theatre—I was there last night, but I would not for the world miss seeing her at a private party—Oh, it is so delightful to see a public performer at a private party—Don't

you think she will look quite different? or will she come dressed as she was last night?"

All this time Lady Longwood was busily circulating her important whisper,—
“How fortunate—think how fortunate I am in acquiring such an intimate!—a woman of rank and fortune in Italy—immensely rich, quite independent—the sale of her jewels alone would enable her to live in opulence any where—to have a *house in Merrion-Square*, if she pleased—just remains on the stage from habit, and is come to Ireland in quest of a lover of hers, or something of that kind—quite a romantic incident—how interesting—quite the air of a foreign princess!”——

“How interesting—quite—quite the air of a foreign princess,”—and all the fair auditors stretched their necks to the utmost extent of elongation, and those whom ill fate or a late arrival placed in the back ground, sprung with unbidden and unwelcome feet on the velvet sofas to catch a

glimpse of Madame Delmatiani, or display their aerial figures in all the graces of tiptoe expectation.

But who of all the groupe were blessed like the Miss Longwoods that night ! They followed in the wake of mamma, not so loud as her, for they took care to breathe their little nothings *sotto voce*, but they too had their secrets to tell, and their intelligence to whisper.

“ Oh, yes, she is immensely rich, and she has diamond ornaments, presents from all the princes of Europe ; and she has sung for Buonaparte and the Pope ; and she is dressed just like us, only the arms quite bare, and the shoulders ; and I am determined to have all my dresses made without shoulder-straps ; and she has real Parisian lace round her neck, and real French flowers in her hair. I'll never wear an English flower again as long as I live ; and she has spoken two Italian sentences, and one in Latin, since she came in. I knew the Ita-

lian, because it sounded just like the Italian in Veneroni's Grammar, and the other I am sure was Latin, because I did not understand it, but all the gentlemen looked as if they did. And what is most delightful of all, she will only be called by her Christian name; it is quite the custom in Italy; and she says she does not know herself by any other name but Zaira. Oh, I wish I had been born in Italy; I wish I had been called Zaira," said both fair speakers, in unison duet, forgetting that if both had been called Zaira, one of them must have adopted another, for distinction-sake at least.

"But won't she sing, won't she do something in a foreign way?" said or looked the fair listeners, who were too far to be heard but by gestures; "and won't we see the lace, and the French flowers, and how she does her hair?"

"Oh, no," said the Miss Longwoods, well taught to disguise their own rage for

exhibition under pretended politeness, "that would be committing her as a public performer. Caroline and I will first sing our Italian duets, and then we are to have waltzing, and then a figure-dance by the Miss Dennets and us, that they composed for us; and then, perhaps, Madame — Zaira will accompany one of us on the harp. I have got a charming harp-song, and I'll try it just to bring her on, you know."

At this arrangement all the hearers were as externally delighted, and internally disappointed, as polite hearers are and seem to be; but there was no time for farther speeches, the folding-doors of the music-room were thrown open, and the superb harp and piano, placed just beneath their ample arch, to increase their sound, were discovered amid a blaze of lights. Zaira, who was seated at the other end of the room amid a small circle of literary men and well-informed women, all unconscious

of the *celat* of her French flowers and classical shoulders, was enjoying the rarest of all feasts, the feast of reason, and wondering at her rarer good fortune in being permitted to enjoy it undisturbed, when the sound of music, of the Miss Longwoods singing, broke on their ears. Zaira bowed in silent answer to a gentleman who had just spoken to her, and made a motion that signified she wished to listen to the music.

There was obviously a mixt effort of good nature and politeness in this, that almost reconciled them to the loss of her conversation; they could no longer listen with admiration, but they beheld her with delight. At every passage tolerably sung she turned her brilliant eyes on the circle with an expression of pleasure so generous and unaffected, that she almost communicated the pleasure she tried to feel, and made the spectators sympathise in the candour of her own heart. Dancing followed, and Zaira, after a few remarks on the foreign dances,

eagerly corrected any inferences that might be drawn from those remarks, by the most liberal and animated praises of the performance. Every thing that could be flattered into grace she admired. Total failure she ascribed to timidity ; and her beautiful sensibility of all that could please, communicated itself to her auditors, or made them ashamed to censure what she consented to praise.

At length the impatience of the company broke through Lady Longwood's real or affected decorum, and she ventured to present in person the petition of the whole circle almost at Zaira's feet, for a song. Zaira instantly consented ; the circle that had hitherto enclosed her opened on every side, and Charles at length saw her beautiful figure breaking like a moon from parting clouds. The Miss Longwoods eagerly pressed forward, proud to display before her their splendid collection of Italian music, and for some moments no names were

to be heard but Mortellari, Winter, Portu-
gallo, and Pucitta, with vehement declara-
tions that each was the divinest composer
on earth, and appeals for the confirmations
of their praises to Zaira, which they did not
give her time to answer. At length she was
allowed to seat herself at the harp, and had
just flung one white arm over it, when La-
dy Longwood, with all the humility of a
suppliant, laid her detaining hand on the
strings.

“ Ah ! if I might supplicate, harmony is
my rage—one duet—only one duet.”

Zaira complied with pleasure, and asked
who would accompany her.

“ There is a beautiful duet here,” said
Lady Longwood, eagerly turning over the
leaves of a music-book, and placing before
Zaira the bravura duet of Rendimi, in Fer-
nando in Mexico.

Zaira asked, “ Who was to join her ?”

“ Perhaps my poor timid Honoria, if
you would condescend,” said Lady Long-

wood, with affected humility, and real presumption.

Zaira complied, though she could hardly suppress a smile ; but the timid, trembling Honoria, when consulted, stoutly declared she could only sing the first ; there was no retreating, and the first singer in Europe had the honour to accompany Miss Longwood as a second in a duet. Charles saw and felt all this ; and the simplicity and goodness of heart that Zaira developed in this short scene, made a stronger impression on him than the dazzling talents that she had displayed till that moment. No exertion of powers, no grace of accompaniment was wanting to the performance. Zaira did all ; instead of contrasting and exposing the presumption and inferiority of *her first*, sustained her with all her powers, those matchless and exquisite powers that made all other singers forget where she sung ; and, at the conclusion, bowed with that flattering humility that confers the

distinction it seems pretending to decline. But after this effort, she declined every opportunity to sing, and retreated to the circle from which she had been called ; and the Miss Longwoods sung and waltzed amid cold bravos and languid gazes for the remainder of the evening.

Lady Longwood went about canvassing for applauses for Honoria's duet, and Caroline's attitudes, in vain, and nothing but the hope of her usual excellent supper detained her disappointed company. At last it appeared ; but Lady Longwood, determined for life or death on a classical evening, was resolved to have nothing more substantial than the slight refreshments of a continental party ; and mammas and misses, who had been talking themselves hungry and thirsty in praise and wonder for four long hours, saw with horror the trays parading in, scantily furnished with lemonade, ices, cake, and jellies ; not a drop of vulgar wine, or substantial eatables, to pollute the elegance of

the entertainment, that equally consulted economy and taste. "Spare fast, that oft with gods doth diet," need not have turned away from such a banquet.

All the party were now dispersed through the rooms in quest of refreshments, and some matrons did not scruple actually to examine and cross-examine the servants on the subject of the entertainment. The circle that had gathered round Zaira at first had now dispersed; but now that the room was almost emptied, Charles succeeded in stationing himself near her chair. He remembered Lady Longwood's whisper—she has come to Ireland in quest of a former lover. He watched her countenance, and thought he involuntarily asked himself, why he felt such an interest in the examination, he did not dare to answer the question. At times he could observe a shade pass over her features, but whether from melancholy or thought, it was not easy to discover; and sometimes she appeared to listen with an

air of abstraction, which her brilliant eyes, and her eager attitude of attention turned to the speaker, seemed intended to contradict; and once, amid the loud applauses that followed her song, she sighed audibly, but this might be from fatigue; and Charles felt that the fatigue and constant excitement of one who was always called on for exertion, on or off the stage, might cause many moments of involuntary depression. At all events, he watched, though he dared not ask himself why.

Zaira was now conversing with a few who had collected round her, and who seemed to feel no less delight in the exertion of her intellectual powers than the circle had lately testified at her vocal ones; and the applauses that she now received seemed far more delightful to her than the noisy bravoës that had drowned the passages of her song they were intended to applaud. She did not say much, but enough to prove, that, had she said more, none else

would have had occasion to speak. She appeared to listen with more satisfaction than even she could be heard with; and there was a sweet and generous pleasure with which she listened to every observation that showed the slightest indication of talent,—the attention by which she tried to solicit, and the smile with which she delighted to reward it, that communicated all she felt, and made all around her feel the enthusiasm of genius, without its envy or its melancholy. Any one who had seen her glances of eager intelligence,—her involuntary attitudes of admiration—her bend of profound attention, would have imagined her the secondary of some brilliant orb, instead of the centre of a system that borrowed all its brightness from her. The circle gradually deepened round her; the conversation had turned on dramatic subjects, and some of her auditors loudly expressed their admiration of her entree the preceding evening. Zaira bowed, but said, with inimitable and

unaffected naivete, that carries its meaning not to the ears but to the heart,—“How flattered I feel! long as I have been on the stage, I have felt a terror you can hardly believe at my first appearance. Last night, though I have appeared on almost every stage in Europe, I could have sunk into the earth with pleasure to avoid the ‘burst’ in which I was forced to enter.”

“How is that possible?” said one of the hearers. “You who speak English with such purity, what could you have to apprehend? It is impossible but you must have been a native, or a resident at least, in these islands before.”

At these words Zaira appeared visibly embarrassed, and the change of her countenance was visible through all her rouge. The speaker pursued the subject, and some one else said casually, “But you have the ‘ars celare artem;’ we would never have known your acquaintance with the classics, but from your comparison between the Orestes in

the *Eumenides* of *Eschylus*, and *Shakspeare's Hamlet*."

"Indolence, indolence," said *Zaira*, trying to laugh; "like the *Laplanders*, who, when a silver mine is discovered, bribe the discoverer to conceal it, for fear the *Swedes* should compel them to work it;" and she then attempted to follow the parallel she had been tracing between the characters of *Orestes* and *Hamlet*, but her powers of expression seemed suddenly to fail her, and she paused in obvious embarrassment; the current of her ideas had been evidently suspended.

Charles, who had stood near her chair, silent and unnoticed, ventured then to repeat a passage from *Schlegel* on the drama, and he added to it the remark of an English critic, that the characters of *Electra* and *Hamlet* bore a closer resemblance to each other than any that the ancient and modern drama furnished. He spoke in French, and his pure and elegant language derived

an interesting contrast from the timid tone in which it was uttered. Zaira, who till then had scarcely observed him, turned towards him with eager delight; and as he continued to speak, she expressed, in rapid but polite French, her surprise at such critical knowledge in so young a speaker. Charles blushed; "I am not the rose," said he, "but I have been near the rose."

● Zaira continued to converse with him almost exclusively; she urged him to speak on the ancient and English drama, and she even condescended to say, that his knowledge of the German authors had given her new ideas; but she renewed her enquiries after the English drama, of which he appeared such a master.

"You must have read much," said she; "but when did the *slaves of the lamp* gather so rich a treasure in the subterranean palace of antiquity?"

At this moment (perhaps the happiest, certainly the most brilliant, of Charles's ex-

istence,) refreshments were placed on the table near which Zaira was seated, and bustling Lady Longwood scattered the circle to right and left in a moment, with hopes and fears about her fatigue, and extravagant unscientific praises of her performance, and importunities that she would taste the confectionary, the French names of which she ran over with a volubility that might have made Zaira believe she was at a restaurateur's in Paris; the cremes of every kind, and the marangles, and the limonade, the *very same* as that which had acquired immortal honour for "la belle limonadiere at the mille colonnes."

Zaira, taking some ice, assured her, that the pleasure of the evening had repaid her exertions; and added, rather speaking to herself than Lady Longwood, "never did I meet with such talents in one so young."

"Oh, my dear, dear Madame Dalmatiani!" said Lady Longwood, catching both

her hands with eager delight, "how you do enchant me! Could I have imagined my poor timid Honoria would have obtained such flattering applause—and from you?"

Zaira looked at her for a moment with silent amazement, and then recollected herself enough to praise Honoria as much as her conscience would let her. But her own thoughts were quite enough for Lady Longwood; and she glided away to repeat to her wondering, weary, incredulous audience Zaira's raptures about her poor Honoria.

"Dear creature," said she, throwing her arm on Honoria's bare broad shoulders in a fine *Sevigné* style, "how timid she is!—these praises quite overpower her—I feel her little heart beating so this moment."

"Oh, mamma!" cried the timid Honoria, twisting herself in no graceful attitude from under the fostering arm, "that odi-

ous bracelet of yours ; it has torn my neck, and now you have got it entangled in my hair."

And, lo ! as Honoria spoke, her mother's arm was too hastily withdrawn, and suspended to it hung an exquisitely turned ringlet, that had been carelessly, too carelessly it seems, twisted among the artificial flowers, and was—as artificial as they. Lady Longwood, "no whit dismayed," joined another circle ; and hiding her involuntary "rape of the lock" in her ridicule, canvassed so successfully, that she was deputed to wait on Zaira with the entreaties for one more delightful air, which was to conclude the happiest evening they had ever passed. Zaira complied in a moment ; but, generously anxious for others, she concealed it under a slight apology for fatigue, and declared herself willing to join any performers in harmony. The professional singers immediately crowded round her, and the splendidly bound volumes of

Italian trios unfolded their broad leaves on the table in a moment ; Zaira, with polite humility, left the choice to any singer who would have the goodness to accompany her. At that moment, she saw Charles's eye fixed, with a look of intelligent delight, on the beautiful trio of "*Padre amato*," in Zaira. She sung what had been fixed on ; but immediately after, called on Sir John S—— and Miss C—— to join her in the trio. Charles's heart beat audibly—the applauses were loud and long—Zaira looked around for him, and was disappointed—the sweetness, the richness, and the deep and mellow tones of her voice had overcome him, and he had turned aside to hide the effect which they had produced. Struggling with his emotions, he came forward at the close of the trio, but the fire of his dark brilliant eye was quenched. Zaira heard the bravos of the crowd, but she felt his tear. She rose a moment after, and Lady Longwood, hap-

py in officious trifling, called out, "Oh, those beautiful flowers!—that beautiful Parisian wreath!—Do you know it is just falling off—Will you allow me"—and she pressed forward to adjust the flowers in Zaira's hair.

"Oh!" said Zaira smiling, "I am not worthy of such an assistant;" and, taking the wreath from her head, she placed it playfully on a bust of Shakespeare that stood on a beautiful marble pedestal near her.

Charles, the most silent, but the most constant of her attendants, was close to her. "But," said he, pointing to the wreath, "the laurel is destined for poets—these roses are the flowers of beauty and love."

"Then on whom shall they be bestowed?" said Zaira.

"On their representative," said Charles, snatching them from the bust, and offering them to her.

Zaira took the flowers, and declining

the reference to herself, said, "Then you must have the honour of being the high-priest at the offering—I have a charming east of the Venus de Medici—Do me the honour to visit her to-morrow evening, and crown *her*."

Charles bowed with speechless delight; but while she replaced the flowers in her dark hair, he could not help comparing its glossy braids, and luxuriant curls, bound with pearl, and entwined with flowers, with the flaxen ringlets of Eva, so unadorned except by their own lustre.

CHAPTER XI.

Proxima Circeæ raduntur litora terna ;

Dives——ubi Solis filia lucoq

Assiduo resonat cantu ———

VIRGIL.

CHARLES was hurrying to **Madame Dalmatiani's** the next evening ; she had apartments in **Sackville-Street** ; but so strong was the force of habit, and so unconscious was he of its force, that he found himself at **Mr Wentworth's**, in **Dominick-Street**, before he discovered his mistake. It is impossible to tell the mixture of feelings which governed him in his determination to enter, though his intention had been far from visiting **Eva** that evening. He knocked at the door, but his hand seemed to him

to tremble, and the knock had a hollow sound in his ear. Mrs Wentworth was at home; he entered the well-known room; Eva and her aunt were at work; the room was large; the dark-brown paper, two candles dimly burning on the work-table, the silent quiet figures that sat beside it, the shelves loaded with volumes of divinity, the still sombrous air of every thing; no musical instrument, no flowers, no paintings; what a contrast to the scene he had last witnessed, and to the scene he was hastening to!

Mrs Wentworth expressed her pleasure at seeing him, without any remark on his absence; Eva trembled with surprise and pleasure, but she never raised her eyes from her work. Charles felt something like constraint, and something like shame and fear in her presence,—that shame that arises from the consciousness of a broken confidence,—his engagement felt to him like

an injury to her ; and as he gazed on her lovely cheek, in which the pure and eloquent blood had mantled so richly since his entrance, he said to himself, " She has no secrets—no thoughts that she might not disclose." Eager to escape from his own thoughts, he offered to read to them while they worked. " With pleasure," said Mrs Wentworth ; and, pointing to the shelves, she offered him his choice of Sandeman's Letters to Hervey, or Boston's Fourfold State, or, if he wished for scriptural exposition, Gill on Isaiah, or Owen on the Hebrews.

Charles viewed them all with the blank eye of despair. " Is there not one human author here ?" said he ; and then recovering himself at the involuntary gloom on Mrs Wentworth's countenance, and the silent dejection of Eva's, he caught up a volume of Milton, and placing it before Mrs Wentworth, appealed to it playfully to plead for him.

“ Let Milton plead for himself,” said Mrs Wentworth, good-humouredly.

Thus encouraged, Charles ventured to read ; and his eyes required but little aid from his imagination to transfer all that the first of poets has said of the purity, beauty, and the unearthliness of his female, to her who might have been her representative in all but fickleness. But as he continued to read, he was perpetually interrupted and obstructed by Eva’s enquiries into the classical allusions with which it abounds, and by Mrs Wentworth’s strong remarks on Milton’s obvious tendency to *Baxterianism* — (now what Baxterianism was Charles did not know, and he chose to leave Mrs Wentworth in full possession, unexamined, of what it might or might not mean) ;—and at length he was completely chilled by the increasing horror and reluctance which they expressed at the free and frequent mention of the most sacred

names, and the familiar dialogue in which they are employed. Charles laid down the book; a long silence followed. Mr Wentworth's rap was heard; he came in hot from controversy at a religious party with whom he had dined. He drew from one pocket the well-known Letters of a Barrister, with Dr H——'s able answer; from another a scarce copy of Toplady's Controversy with Fletcher on Predestination; and thus, doubly armed, was proceeding to give his wife an account of a debate on "imputed righteousness," at the same time giving a hint of a bye-battle with Charles, by desiring him to glance over the Checks to Anti-nomianism, and give his opinion of them, when the clock struck ten, the signal for the servants to assemble to prayers. They came; and Wentworth, whether elated by recent victory, or from some fresh impulse of the spirit, gave an extempore prayer so long, that the conclusion of

it found all the family asleep except Mrs Wentworth, Eva, and Charles. Wentworth went round rousing them from their slumbers with no gentle voice or action, earnestly assuring them, that in the world of flames and torture, to which their carnal sloth was hurrying them fast, there was no slumbering or sleeping, and exhorting them not to close their eyes till they had prayed that they might no more be sleepy dogs, lying down, loving to slumber ;—to excite them to which, he distributed a large handful of evangelical pamphlets among them, which they received with drowsy bows, half-closed eyes, and hoarse, inarticulate thanks.

Then Wentworth had leisure to turn to Charles. “ And is this a new invention of Satan’s to cover the heads of fools from hearing the word of God ?” said he, taking up Charles’s tasselled hat that lay on a chair. “ You are going, I presume, to a

party, as they call it—that is, to a place where sinners assemble to shut their souls and ears against all that could save the one or pierce the other. And at what an hour do they meet! at the very hour when the people of God are supplicating for mercy in vain on the unthinking wretches! Well may such meetings be called deeds of darkness in the literal sense; and well does the Apostle couple murders, drunkenness, *revellings*, and such like.”

Charles calmly took up his hat, and, bowing to Mrs Wentworth, he was going to retire. The dazzling attractions of his figure, embellished by dress, and perhaps animated by some slight suppressed feeling of passion, never were more resistless or commanding. Mrs Wentworth felt more for Eva than ever she had felt till that moment. There was a strong contrast between the brilliant figure before her, and the gloomy existence to which he

had devoted himself, and of which the gloom appeared to herself at that moment. "Stay with us," said she, "and we will try to make the evening pleasant to you—we have some other books."

"And is he going to a party?" said Mr Wentworth, who, like many angry people, had talked himself into a passion about Charles's engagement, while he did not think him engaged.

"I am engaged," said Charles.

"To the actress, I suppose," said Wentworth, intending only a virulent sneer, but unconsciously discovering the truth.

"I am engaged to Madame Dalmatiani," said Charles, in a still more hesitating voice.

Mrs Wentworth, retreating, seated herself in silence; Eva, folding up her work, rose to retire.

"Where are you going, child?" said Mr Wentworth; "the door is at the other end of the room; do you mean to go out through the wall?"

Eva, with the utmost exertion of her spirits, smiled, and went out through the door which she did not see. Wentworth and his wife looked at each other in silence.

CHAPTER XII.

————— Ha!l, foreign wonder !

When certain these rude shades did never breed.

MILTON.

WHAT a contrast in Zaira's apartment—lights, music, flowers, beauty, and genius ! No effort to drag on the hours, and measure out time by stated employments ; time seemed only measured by enjoyment, and life itself a kind of prescriptive title to happiness, (the best kind of happiness, intellectual enjoyment, combined with the most refined gratifications of the sense ;) groups were conversing without effort, listeners attending without ennui or affected interest ; music without any silence of weariness.

some attention, or burst of disciplined applause ; literature, and no pedantry ; perfect ease, and no relaxation : the best poetry in all the languages of Europe was profusely, but not obtrusively, scattered round the room, intermixed with biography, criticism, and works still more profound : vases filled with flowers, and lamps of classical structure, diffused their fragrance and their light among volumes and busts ; and Horace, Anacreon, and Moore, might have been here said to live amid roses once more. Every thing breathed pleasure, without laborious excitement ; and there was all the spirit of society, without the mechanism of its forms.

At De Courcy's first entrance, it was easy to observe the truth of Lady Longwood's observation, that Zaira was not only independent, but wealthy ; the number of attendants, and the splendour of her whole establishment, proved this sufficiently. And again the motive of her continu-

ing on the stage, and of her coming to Ireland, tortured him with irresistible solicitude. When he experienced this feeling, he said to himself, it is curiosity ; but he already began to feel it was something more. Thus, in the first movements of the heart, we always try to deceive ourselves ; we dread the approach of a power, whose influence we anticipate as *ungovernable*, as the warrior in the Old Testament said to him who warned him of the approach of an enemy, "Thou seest but the shadows of the mountains as if they were men," and tried to believe himself till he became the captive of those whom he derided as phantoms. As he passed through the rooms, the objects of delight and luxury around only struck him as assimilated to her taste, or indicative of her character. The books, the flowers, the instruments seemed to him like the embellishments of a temple, that announce the character of the deity to which it is dedicated ; and in inhaling this luxuri-

ous atmosphere by which she was surrounded, he seemed to enjoy her presence in the objects over which its influence was effused, as seamen are said to know the coasts of Arabia before they are visible, by the fragrant emanations of the gales that are wafted from their shores.

She came in very late ; she had acted at the theatre ; but this had never occurred to De Courcy, who thought only of his invitation for the evening, and she did not wish him to be reminded of it ; it was singular, that even already she did not wish to be considered by him as an actress. She passed through the rooms, conversing successively with the literary groups that filled them ; she was evidently much fatigued, but her fatigue did not extend to her talents, and only gave a delicious languor to her voice and expression ; it was still the sounding of Apollo's bow, though the string was relaxed. Her conversation, addressed to various professors of the arts, of poetry, and

of general literature, was varied to the subjects and styles of each. Like Cleopatra, she could give audience to the various ambassadors of her court in the native language of each.

At last she passed into a small room, where there was but a single groupe; this room was almost filled with flowers, and the light shaded by veils of muslin,—a light, that, like the mistress of the house, was most seductive, because less dazzling, made the company seem as if they were reposing in bowers by moonlight. Her harp was there; the party were conversing together, but there was an instant and deep silence, when throwing her white arm over the strings, she produced a few chords of irregular, but exquisite modulation. They all crowded round her, pressing her to sing, and Charles joined them; till, recollecting her fatigue, he condemned his own selfishness, and entreated her not to sing, in a tone

that seemed to contradict its own petition. The indifference with which she had listened to the other petitioners, was exchanged in a moment for an expression of interest, and a smile of the brightest, softest pleasure, wandered over her beautiful features. It is *Craterus then who loves the king*, said she to herself; but *Hephestion loves Alexander*, and she immediately prepared to sing. The air she selected was that remarkable one which Farinelli was employed to sing to awake the king of Spain from a state of gloomy and desponding abstraction, that threatened the loss of his intellects, and which is said to have been successful. It was simple and tender in the highest degree, and the murmured admiration of all the circle, and the tear of one in it, bore testimony to its rich and thrilling sweetness. At the close, she suddenly changed the measure, and striking the symphony of a gay Venetian air,

accompanied it with such rapid articulation and festivity of expression, that every foot trembled to join in the dance, to its light and lively measure.

"I appear like a trifler," said Zaira to De Courcy, when her song had ended. "I would not wish to appear so to you—but of the two sources of mental or physical excitement, contrast and association, the former is certainly the strongest, and I often have recourse to it to produce that excitement that is expected from me."

"And do you indeed think contrast the strongest?" said De Courcy; to whom this speech seemed to develop the light feeling of the continental women, who are always looking for a *coup-de-theatre* in whatever they do.

"No," said Zaira, thoughtfully; "Contrast appears to affect the arts, and association the feelings. In contrast there must always be surprise, and surprise produces a momentary vivacity of impres-

sion, unfavourable perhaps to deep feeling. But association forces reflection on us, by giving us leisure to collect and compare the minute and resembling features of which it is composed. Contrast excites emotion, but association leads to reverie ;” and, as she spoke, her features assumed a shade that seemed suggested not by the reflections of the moment. De Courcy, to whom her pause was eloquence, did not interrupt it by a whisper ; it seemed as if, in her last words, she had begun to speak of herself, and he felt as if her very silence was like reposing a kind of tacit confidence in him. “ With the thoughts of our country,” said Zaira, speaking in a still more suppressed voice, “ how many associations are combined !— even in its recollections, though we can trace nothing but misfortune, that misfortune gives us a thrill like pleasure ; and though when we return to it, we only expect their revival, we expose our wounds to its native air, with a hope that flatters,

though it does not heal. Does not one of the first of poets sooth even death with the recollection of our country ?

"

' Meriens dulces reminiscitur Argos.'

VIRGIL.

" What would I give," said De Courcy, who thought her imagination was now wandering to the shores of Italy ; " what would I give to be a native of that country which has a share in your recollection ?— In joy we sympathize with strangers, but we lament only what we love. The green leaves, with which the ancients decorated the door in their houses of pleasure have long withered away, but to this day we find their phial of tears near the urns of their friends."

" What would you give to be my countryman?" said Zaira, rapidly ; " and how can you tell you are not ?" And with these mysterious words she quitted him, and urned to a group near her.

A gush of delight thrilled through the frame of De Courcy.—*Her countryman!*—and then Lady Longwood's hint,—“She came to Ireland to look for a lover,” recurred to him like the nights in the desert, when frost succeeds heat almost intolerable. And at this moment Lady Longwood's testimony, though he knew the futility of her character, appeared to him irresistible; for he felt that such weak worldly people somehow contrive to ascertain the motives of conduct much sooner than those who are guessing or groping their way through the maze of sentiment; to facts they go, by facts they decide, and they seldom are wrong, because they have nothing to lead them astray. “Can she then have come to Ireland to seek a lover?—Can Zaira's lover *be to be sought?*—Or, if such a wretch be, is he worth seeking?—Or, may she not find a lover?—Oh, what a madman am I!”

This mental soliloquy was over in a mo-

ment; he turned, and was surprised to find himself not alone, so completely was he abstracted; but when he turned, Zaira was conversing calmly with one of the company, who was pointing out that passage in Metastasio's works, where he deprecates the *improvisatori* talent of his country, as destructive of genuine poetical power, while he laments that he had himself been seduced in his youth to practise it.

"But you do not condemn this charming talent, which you certainly possess?" said the speaker.

"I believe, sir," said Zaira, rather coldly, "it is a talent that belongs only to native Italians," and she turned away.

Charles caught the words,—only to native Italians. Twice in one night, then, she had appeared to disclaim her being a native of Italy. Yet still, what could be her motive for visiting Ireland? At this moment young Longwood, the most un-

welcome of all intruders, lounged up to De Courcy, complaining of the damned bore of such an evening, and regretting that he had not accompanied his mother and sisters (for so he was instructed to hint) to the Castle that night.

“ Nothing here but talking and singing. By heavens, she is going to sing again !” and he pointed to Zaira, who, yielding to the importunity of the company, was once more seated at the harp.

As she sat down, the beautiful wreath of flowers that was twined in her dark hair, became loose, and one of the roses fell on her neck, making a bright contrast with its whiteness. She attempted to arrange it, but did not succeed ; and the graceful motion of her arms in this simple attitude, seemed to develope a new charm in this most attractive being, who could, in a moment, combine the extremes of simplicity and genius. She placed the wreath beside her.

“The season of the rose is departed with me,” said she, glancing her dark eye at De Courcy; “but that of the nightingale still remains;” and she began to sing an Irish air. It was that beautiful one to which Moore’s words have given new beauty—
“Hath sorrow thy young days shaded?”

“She is all art and affectation,” said Longwood, almost audibly, whispering De Courcy.

De Courcy was silent.

“Look at the attitude in which she bends over her harp—look at the attitude in which she turns to take that note from the servant. I suppose an order from the manager.”

“But is that affectation?” said Charles, watching her changing countenance as she read.—“See how white her lips are growing.—See.” It was not affectation, for before Zaira could finish the note, she fainted.

CHAPTER XIII.

How hapless is th' applauded virgin's lot,
Her God forgetting, by her God forgot !
Pleasure its gale, and flattery lends its breath,
To waft her smoothly to eternal death.

WESLEY.

ZAIRA'S female attendants were summoned; and the company, after some enquiries which none could answer, dispersed. De Courcy was at her door at an early hour the next day; he was told her indisposition was accidental, and that she was well; but he did not obtain admission for some following days, nor did she appear at the theatre for that week. During this period, it was his only employment to hasten to her door, where the same excuse was repeated; and to *call* every day at

Wentworth's. During the first part of his acquaintance with Eva, his steps almost unconsciously bore him to her uncle's every day, where he lingered till preparations for their early dinner made longer delay impossible. Now, on quitting Zaira's door, he was obliged to remind himself that he *ought to go*, and latterly to frame excuses to himself for not going just that day. It need not be observed, that very slight ones soon began to be sufficient. Thus a sentiment was rapidly assuming the form of a duty. Had his intermitted visits, or his abstraction been observed, he would have been happier; he would have had an opportunity of justifying himself, and this we always wish for when we begin to feel we want it. An accused person, too, always feels like an injured one, and we take pleasure in being accused by others in certain states of feeling, because such accusation assists us in escaping from our own. A scene of explanation would have shewn Eva, too,

in a new light, but it was one she would not appear in—it would have given Eva a new interest, but it was an interest she disdained to borrow. We love to have false motives imputed to us, that we may be willingly ignorant of the true; and the reproach of her pensive unaltered smile was the last he could submit to bear. He said to himself, “I love to gaze on the glowing colours of this wonderful being, but it is only that I may feel more refreshment from the pure green of another character;” but while he said this, he was aware that those who argue in metaphor seldom argue for truth; for every day he would have hung over those brilliant colours, had they been unveiled to him, and every day he forgot to *refresh himself with the green*. During this time, Zaira wrote to the most intimate friend she had on earth, a Madame St Maur, who lived near Paris, but to whom she never could prevail on herself to disclose the circumstances of her life, till she was at a distance from her.

She wrote to her, assigned the cause of her visiting Ireland, the hope that had sustained her there, till the night she had fainted on receiving a letter that crushed all hope for ever; and she concludes with these words, "What have I now to live for?"

Madame St Maur's Answer to Zaira.

1814.

"What have you to live for, ma belle Zaire?—Why, live to love; and unless you live to that, and for that, you live to no purpose, in my opinion, that is, in the opinion of any rational woman, any French-woman, I mean. And so you would waste your brilliant existence in running after the shadow of—what!—a brat, that if it had had the good fortune to be born in Paris, would have found its way to *les enfans trouvees*, and never disturbed you by its cries from that to this.—Oh, my dear Zaire, at a thousand, or five hundred, (or I

don't know how many leagues—I am a wretched geographer, but I suppose it is at least a thousand leagues from Paris to Dublin,) I cannot stand the fire of your eyes—veil them, in mercy to me and all mankind. I cannot encounter the sublime and beautiful anger of their flashes even at this distance, though I see and feel you are arming them with all their lightnings to blast me for my last daring sentence. Turn them on your lovers, and spare me;—the fact is, (but I don't tell facts well) I cannot bear a child of *that Fioretti's*, and I can scarcely bear you for being fond of it. Now, don't you forgive me? a beautiful woman feels little difficulty in forgiving any abuse of her husband, that implies a homage to herself. But, seriously, my dear, I cannot comprehend this frightful story of yours, with such a father and such a husband. What a frightful father,—what an odious husband!—But they are dead, and so we need think no more about them.

“ Oh, my dear, what a becoming thing

death is when the living remember it properly, that is, when the recollection gives a pensive grace (for a moment, no more) to the features, or a striking period to a sentence which no one finishes half so well as you, and therefore I will leave it in your hands; only remember, that the tear which your own Sterne so beautifully describes as giving a new lustre to the sword of Monsieur le Marquis de N——, would only *have rusted* what it *embellished*, if it had been suffered to remain on it too long. Take the hint, my beautiful Zaire, intelligent as you are beautiful, and remember that eyes bright as yours were never created only to weep.

“ And so you are in Ireland—ah, take care—recollect that Telemachus, who set out in pious quest of a father, found himself wrecked on the island of Calypso, the island of Love! May this never be your fate, at least the wrecking part of it!—There was a vessel lately lost near

Dieppe, and every soul perished!—How dreadful—and how your genius might embellish the description; but I still tremble to think of a wreck even in metaphor. Ah, these Irishmen! they are dangerous beings. No wonder—they have, I am told, something of that ardour, that devotedness to the sex, that sentiment for women which formerly distinguished Frenchmen, and obtained for them the highest glory man need pretend to, that of being agreeable to women. But the terrible revolution has denationalized us, and our modern beaux do nothing but oil their Titus's, turn in their toes, and talk of horses—apropos of heads, or of wigs rather, which is just the same thing—I have seen one or two lately in the style of Henry IV.—awful phenomena these! In other countries revolutions are intimated by signs more alarming;—in France by a change of the fashions. What will this come to? For my part, (no Frenchman or woman could ever speak of any thing without adding, for my part) I

am reconciled to any dynasty that will exempt us from conscriptions and taxes; quite of the sentiments of the Fauxbourg — who, when the Emperor rode among them the other day, shouted, ‘ Live a thousand years, but give us peace !’

“ Nothing but politics in Paris, that is, we never speak of them, but we pay it off with thinking. I saw the Empress in her carriage yesterday, she looked very melancholy ; but such is the system of espionage here, that it would be dangerous to remark it. Why will princes lay snares by their looks ? Amid all this we have one consolation,—justice, ample justice, is about to be done to the beauty of Parisian ancles ; the petticoats are growing shorter every day, and, provided they do, no matter how long the political faces are. Do you know they say milord Wellington has actually crossed the Pyrenees ?—the Pyrenees !—my God, but that is impossible. I would as soon believe Livy’s foolish story about

Hannibal's having melted a rock with vinegar, after first heating it with an immense wood fire, while M. de Viesmenil shewed me the other day, that a few lines before, Livy says there was not a twig for fuel to be found in the whole region : And they say too, that the allies are making a *demonstration* toward Paris, and that in a few weeks we shall have Cossacks bivouacking in the Boulevards ; but some people will say any thing. Can you believe them, then ?

“ Ah ! should that event ever take place, what glory for France !—Doubtless, these conquerors, intoxicated, enchanted with the refinements, the elegancies, the unimaginable superiorities of the metropolis of Europe, would instantly confess themselves slaves, and Paris, covered with the glory of a sublime defeat, would behold her conquerors only to conquer them. Already I see the formidable Alexander flinging off his Russian furs, and thawing his polar ice in the glowing meridian of Parisian luxury,

and even the uxorious Frederick clasping to his bosom the *souvenir* of a Parisian beauty, instead of the urn of his broken-hearted queen. I long to see them waltz; doubtless they will waltz if they come here. I am told the Emperor of Russia waltzes like an angel. Ah, can it be possible, and he has never yet seen Paris!—it is inconceivable—but then a few lessons. Yes, it is only in Paris that the *dieu de la danse* was ever worshipped as he deserves to be. I am told my style of beauty is exactly to the taste of Marshal Prince Blucher. Ah, my God! what associations, what anticipations! I am devoured by these chimeras of the soul; perhaps it was not only Roxalana's *petit nez retroussé* that was destined to new-model a dynasty. But before the Marshal is at my feet, I must give orders for altering my sandals; they no longer wear ribbons round the ancles.

“But to return to the Cossacks. I have been told they eat tallow, and drink train-

oil ; tallow and train-oil, but this is inconceivable ! Can you imagine it ? But what an interesting exhibition ! I am distracted between my fears of their visiting Paris, and my wish to see them eat tallow. My patriotism and my curiosity are producing within me the most frightful struggles ; but a woman's curiosity is so much stronger than any other of her sensations. Adieu then, ill-fated love of my country ; you must yield to that which overcomes every thing with me. I must see the Cossacks eat tallow, though I die of horror at the sight.

“ Ah, what a calamity !—it is not the Empress alone has caused to look melancholy ; our poor friend, Madame D'Orsange, precisely the day-week that she had buried her husband and only child, had her Angola goat stolen from her, and lost her incomparable Lury and two Java sparrows, by the perfidy of a friend who envied her superb aviary. What a dreadful event ! but,

Heavens, what magnanimity, what greatness of soul !—she never shed a tear for husband, child, goat, Lury, or sparrow ! She only ordered her coffee to be made a little stronger. But Heaven delights to try the virtuous with misfortunes ; so I tell her, and she believes me.

“ As to M. de Viosmenil and me, we go on just as usual. I never will marry him while my mother lives, and while my constant attentions are necessary to prolong that life, whose value increases every moment with its precariousness.

“ You know I have been in the habits of putting her to bed for some years past. I was prevailed on the other night to go to a ball ; quadrilles were danced as merrily as ever they were at St Cloud, by the Duchess of Abrantes and her party, while her husband was flying for his life from Portugal ; suddenly a sentiment, an instinct (like Cinderilla’s) told me I had outstaid the hour. I precipitated myself from

the seat—I flew down stairs—I rushed from the house. M. de Viosmenil followed me ; every one thought we were mad. I reached home—I winged my way to my mother's apartment—I threw open the curtains,—‘ And are you in bed then, my mother ?’

‘ I am, my daughter ; but I could not sleep till I saw those beautiful eyes, which, close or open, I have blessed before I went to sleep these six and thirty years.’

“ I wept—my mother wept. M. de Viosmenil was affected.

‘ Ah, my friend,’ said I, extending my hand to him, ‘ can you promise me a pleasure like that you deprive me of, in tearing me from this beloved mother !’

“ What a scene—what an effect resulting from the simplest elements of feeling !

“ We wear a profusion of the most brilliant flowers in our hats ; bonnets, the English would call them. Among them, I saw lately one or two white lilies ; it was well

for the pretty heads that bore them that they were not seen, otherwise they might not long have remained on their shoulders. Adieu, beautiful Zaire ; I embrace you, though at an immeasurable distance.

“ DELPHINE ST MAUR.

“ P. S.—After all, though the scene at mamma's bedside was very good, she need not have mentioned I was six and thirty before M. de Viosmenik.”

CHAPTER XIV.

Baptisant son chagrin du nom de pitié.

BOILEAU.

WHERE was Montgomery all this time, from the moment that Eva had avowed or admitted her preference of De Courcy?—He had hid himself in the country, not in a romantic Beltenebros' spirit of exile, but with a determination to contend with and subdue a passion, which could no longer be soothed by hope, or sanctioned by principle.

But reports had reached him there, and he had now come to town, resolved to see with his own eyes, hear with his own ears, and judge with his own understanding,

and few were better qualified for the task. He met De Courcy accidentally in Westmoreland-street; they walked on together—"How are the Wentworths?"

"They were very well when——"

"*When*," said Montgomery, laughing—"when—why, how long is it since you saw them?"

"Two or three days, I believe."

"Two or three days, and *you believe*?"—

"What needs this iteration?" said De Courcy, trying to laugh in his turn.

The forced sound of his laugh was lost in the thunder of a splendid carriage that was passing over Carlisle bridge. The young men looked up; a lady was in it; she leaned forward, smiled and bowed—"Her bow might, from the bidding of the gods, command." It was Zaira. De Courcy, gazing on her, forgot to bow; but the vermillion that suffused his cheek; the quickened lustre of his humid eyes; his shortened respiration, faltering step, and lin-

gering, long-reverted gaze, struck on Montgomery's very heart. They walked up Sackville-street in silence. "Are you going to Wentworth's?" said Montgomery.

"If you please."

"If *I* please?"

"My dear Montgomery," said De Courcy, more and more anxious for the temporary shelter of a jest; "my dear Montgomery, this stormy day, you are a strict observer of the Pythagorean maxim, when the wind rises, worship the echo; but, however, I am going to Wentworth's, whether you please or not; or even if you don't please—will that please you?"

Through this forced mirth Montgomery saw restrained pique, and his thoughts instantly found a new channel. De Courcy might have known his attachment to Eva, and this might be the language, not of indifference, but of jealousy. Whatever it was, he was resolved to hear it out, to trace it, if possible, through all its ambiguities of

darkness, and confront it in light.—“*Εὐ φαιε
δολασσον*,” said Montgomery to himself, re-
ferring to his own situation.

• They arrived at Wentworth's: Now it
seemed to be Eva's fate, that, just at this
period, her uncle's house, society, every
light under which she could be beheld,
every association connected with her image,
should be particularly and pre-eminently
repulsive. Macowen was there every day,
and all day long, defining, disputing, dog-
matizing, hair-splitting, and excommunicating,—the absolute Pope of the parlour-
conclave. His hearers, dazzled by his ora-
tory, stunned by his volubility, proud of
his reputation, afraid of his virulence,
would hardly have denied that a crust
was a shoulder of mutton, if it had so
pleased Lord Peter to call it. It was lu-
dicrous to hear these people, the moment
they were allowed to speak (and that was
not often,) break out into exclamations

against those who suffered themselves to be led by worldly teachers; or, as Macowen expressed it, suffered themselves to be harnessed to the old lumbering state-coach of the Hierarchy, that they might drag it over rough and smooth, under the lash of tithes-men and proctors, bedizened with the faded trappings of lifeless ordinances and beggarly elements.

This day, however, he was resolved that more than admirers should witness his triumph; he announced that he had lately been engaged in the conversion of one who had nearly been brought to *see the error of his way*, and whom he had invited to meet him at Mr Wentworth's, that he might "produce his strong reasons" before the godly friends who were assembled there. Mr Wentworth was just expressing his satisfaction, that his house was chosen for the assembling of the saints, and with twinkling eyes, erect figure, fluttered handkerchief, prelusive hems, and oscillating mo-

tion in his chair, was speaking, as plain as attitudes could speak, his agitation of delight at the expected controversy, when a loud rap was heard at the door. The party sat hushed in grim repose.—“He is but a babe in grace,” said Macowen, with a preparatory leer of conciliation at the company, “he is but a babe, and must be fed with milk.”

The door was thrown open—enter the babe—a man turned of fifty, six feet two inches high, broad and bulky in proportion, with an atrabilious complexion, a voice of thunder, and a tread that shook the room. The contrast was unspeakably ridiculous. “Babe!” murmured De Courcy; “Babe!” echoed Montgomery, and both had some difficulty in subduing their rebellious muscles to the placid stagnation that overspread the faces around them.—But the calm was of short continuance.—This Quibus Flestrin, this man-mountain of a catechumen, came not to sit with low-

ly docility at the feet of his teachers, but to prove that he was able to teach them. If he was a babe, as De Courcy said, "tetchy and wayward was his infancy;" no ill-nursed, ill-tempered, captious, squalling brat, was ever a greater terror and torment in the nursery. He resisted, he retorted, he evaded, he parried, he contradicted, carped, and cavilled on the ninth part of a hair.

Macowen lost his ground; then he lost his breath; then he lost his temper;—scintillating eyes, quivering lips, and streaks of stormy red marking their brown cheeks, gave signal of fierce debate. All the weapons of fleshly warfare were soon drawn in the combat, and certain words that would have led to a different termination of the dispute among men of this world, passed quick and high between them. Struck with shame, they paused—a dreary pause of sullen anger and reluctant shame.—
"Now, shan't we have a word of prayer,"

said Mr Wentworth, who had been watching them with as much deliberate enjoyment as an ancient Roman would a spectacle of gladiators.

“ For Heaven’s sake, ma’am, where is Eva !” said De Courcy in a low voice to Mrs Wentworth.

“ Attending her school always at this hour.”

“ Her school ?”

“ Yes ; a school of little orphans, whom she maintains out of her allowance principally ; clothes by her own work, and teaches with her own lips.”

“ But I never knew this before,” said De Courcy.

“ Nor ever would from her,” said Mrs Wentworth calmly—“ her left hand does not know what her right hand doth ; and she always contrived to make her absence appear accidental.”

This was all she could manage to say—

for at the mention of the school Matowen was off like a rocket ; all hissing, blazing, and mounting, but not spent so soon. This same school had been a matter of argumentation, long, loud, and vehement, between him and the Wentworths. He had insisted that it should not be opened, and that the orphans should neither be admitted, clothed, or fed ; till he, Judge in the Last Resort, had digested, compiled, and arranged the materials for their religious instruction, *in ordine ad spiritualia*. Now this was no easy matter ; for his creed was shifting ever hour, not only in points of discipline, but even in matters of doctrine. His views, as he called them, were every day enlarging ; and every day he had the same task to go over, from house to house, with his well-disciplined, patient audience, to convince them that his views were becoming more scriptural, and that in a short time he would form a system on the purest models of primitive orthodoxy.

They heard and believed, on the consoling conviction that they should all in a few days be apostles in their own right, by virtue of the patents issued from Macowen's genuine office. Now, this office of universal censor, Mr Macowen found it very convenient and desirable to be active in a particular department of, that of organizing a new charitable institution of whatever description ; there his talents were displayed—his importance magnified ; there he lived, and moved, and had his being. Endless were the debates, and countless the breakfasts and dinners eat for the good of the famishing objects, before Mr Macowen's eloquence, appetite, and sense of importance, were sufficiently gratified.

Against Eva's little institution he had infinite objections, as he knew no system of catechetical instruction pure enough to harmonize with his creed, and fit to be put into the hands of children who were to be brought up *in the way of life*. Thus half of the poor orphans must have star-

ved, and the other half been mendicants, the worst of mendicants, naked, lying, thievish wretches ; rank in premature depravity, and earning the gallows with anticipated industry ; lashed to vice by blows and curses, and robbed of its profits by callous veterans, that hunger might make them 'cute (acute,) while Mr Macowen was committing to flames much milder than those he condemned their authors to) the catechisms of Watts, Mann, Lewis, Stopford, &c. &c. &c. ; and declaring, that no evil the children might suffer from the delay could be equal to the evils attendant on their receiving their religious impressions from any teacher whose tenets were unsanctioned by the word of God ; which, (being interpreted) signified any teacher but himself.

Eva went on her own quiet way, not without frequent prayer to Him, who could alone further every good word and work, that He would consecrate her incapacity, and bless her feeble efforts for his

service; and in a few weeks saw round her ten little orphans, healthy, docile, and diligent, to whom she ventured to read the most elementary parts of Scripture, and invite children to "come unto Him who forbid them not;" while Mr Macowen was still, morning, noon, and night, searching up, down, and across all the book-stands in Anglesea Street, Ormond Quay, and the Coombe, for an old Lutheran catechism that the Queen brought to England in the year 1761, and of which his researches, after all, could not trace a copy extant.

Lo, therefore, at the inauspicious mention of this school, his ire burst forth, and blazed with terrific resplendency.—He was really eloquent—a natural orator; and he was now speaking for life and death—for the double interest of his eloquence and his importance, the credit of which had been much diminished in the late conflict.

Mr Wentworth joined him *totis viribus*;

for he had all a trader's natural invincible terror of money being laid out without value received; and, all-evangelical as he was, he would rather have seen his niece's contribution blaze in the front of a popular subscription, (Miss Wentworth 30, 40, 50 guineas,) or heard the thick well-rolled paper drop *full in his hearing* into the velvet-lined box of a collector at a popular charity sermon, where *Mr Wentworth and family's* well-filled seat drew every eye with expectation of ample donations to be recorded in public papers, than known how much *money was going* in her foolish whim about orphans; for, as he said, what good can be expected of orphans, who—who—do not go to Bethesda Chapel? A shrinking, nameless fear of *the objects** of the institution being known to her little pupils, had prevented her

* They are Magdalens.

bringing them to Bethesda Chapel.—This fear she did not, could not, avow even to her uncle.

The Babe also joined, for he was ashamed of the late altercation, and glad to make peace with Macowen even on his own terms. The motion for a "word of prayer" passed unanimously ; and Macowen, proud of his acknowledged gift of supplication, and still prouder of his recovered consequence, was preparing, when De Courey whispered Montgomery—" Shall we visit the school?"

" Yes, certainly," said Montgomery eagerly ; " yes, certainly ;—let us go to the school."

" Now," said Montgomery triumphantly to himself—" Now, we shall see whether his heart develops itself, or whether he has a heart at all to be developed—Certainly, Mr Wentworth's house is not the place for the discovery."

To the school they went, but that was

not the place to develope De Courcy's heart. Eva was indeed there, with dishevelled hair, flushed cheek, and busy finger, pointing out lessons, and cutting out work for her little scholars, whose eyes, and fingers, and tongues, moving all in concert with hers, and all directed to her, mingled the singular appearance of eager intelligence with that of automatal mechanism. To Montgomery she appeared like our first mother, binding up the straggling and decaying groupes of flowers, and teaching them to bloom (Montgomery added mentally) unto life eternal,—To De Courcy she appeared—very unlike Zaira.

The business of clothing, teaching to work, and instructing to read, sounds beautiful and sublime in reading and theory, particularly when a beautiful girl, not fifteen, is the *maitresse*, and ten little orphans are half of them on her lap, and half of them at her feet; but the detail—the detail—no one but Eva herself could have

patience with them—De Courey certainly could not.—Their dullness, their blunders, their stitches, taken horizontally, perpendicularly, diagonally, when they should have been taken in any and every other direction—their horrible confusion of the most sacred names in their religious lessons,—appalling to Eva's ears, revolting to Montgomery's, and ludicrous to De Courcy's—their dirty hair, nails, stockings, and skirts of stuff-frocks, for which they were gently and vainly rebuked by Eva, while they gazed at her with stupid eyes, fixed immoveably on the spotless white of her drapery—their looks speaking the concentrated spirit of childish envy, without a wish or thought of imitation—their *Babel of brogues*, where the drawling Munster accent was holding vain and perpetual war with the angular and exalted cadence of the North—All this, and more, and worse than all this—worse than “fables yet have

feigned, or fear conceived"—worse than could be imagined except by Eva, or some one in her situation, burst all at once on De Courcy's eyes, ears, and other senses. "Can a woman be more delightfully employed?" said Montgomery, as they retired.

De Courcy said, "Certainly not."—But he thought she might, more delightfully for himself at least,—a kind of refined selfishness had been stealing over him since his first acquaintance with Zaira.

Montgomery still continued to speak of Eva—of her worth—her virtues—her graces; and though Montgomery seldom quoted, he now quoted, and repeated with *emphasis*, more than with *good discretion*, Milton's "Ode to a virtuous young lady,"

"Lady, who in the prime of earliest youth
Wisely hast shunn'd the broad way and the green;
And with those few art eminently seen,
Who labour up the hill of heavenly truth—

The better part, with Mary and with Ruth,
 Chosen thou hast ; and they that overween,
 And at thy growing virtue fret their spleen,
 No anger find in thee, but pity and ruth.—
 Thy care is fix'd, and zealously attends
 To fill thy odorous lamp with deeds of light,
 And hope that reaps not shame ; therefore be sure—”

“Be sure—be sure—help me out, De Courcy ; you know poetry better than I do.”

De Courcy went on—

“Thou, when the Bridegroom with his feastful friends,
 Passes to bliss at the mid-hour of night,
 Hast gained thy entrance, virgin, wise and pure.”—

And, as he finished, De Courcy burst into an eulogium on Eva, so warm, so loud, so elaborate, that any one would have thought, instead of expressing his own feelings as a lover, he was trying to inspire those feelings into Montgomery.

Montgomery became silent ; and du-

ring this pause, De Courcy, silent also, was at full, unwilling leisure to compare his feelings on his habitual, voluntary recollection of Zaira, and the necessity of *re-calling* the image of Eva by an effort of duty, not of imagination. The thought of Zaira came over his mind, like the floating notes of some delicious music, whose remembrance we cannot exclude ; but when he wished to think of Eva, he was compelled to praise her—to remind himself of her—and to talk of her to others, whose sympathy might assist his own. “Thank Heaven,” said he to himself, as he ascended the steps of Zaira’s splendid house—“Thank Heaven, we shall have no A B, ab, or E b, eb, lessons *here*—How can Eva”—His heart struck him, and he paused. Eva, instructing, clothing, and fostering her orphans, was indeed less brilliant than the beautiful, talented Zaira, the Aspasia, the Melpomene, the Calliope, the Terpsi-

chore, the enchantress of all eyes and all hearts ; the bright full moon, whose glory filled and illuminated the whole sphere of his mind, while, "twinkling faint, and distant far," the image of Eva scarce glimmered on the verge—the utmost boundary of the intellectual horizon.

The first object he saw on entering the rooms, was—the last he would wish to have seen *there*—Montgomery—yes, Montgomery, *propria persona*, as quiet, thoughtful, and observant, in this fairy palace, as in Mr Wentworth's brown-papered parlour. Montgomery, by dint of strong interest powerfully exerted, had got himself introduced to Zaira's parties ; and he had a motive which brought and kept him there, averse as he was, both from principle and habit, to such scenes and their inmates.

To De Courcy, his appearance there, everywhere, seemed the result of a deliberate system of *espionage* ; and he saw, with

a feeling of resentment, aggravated by a consciousness, which was the more irritable, because it was guilty. He was determined to brave it out, and met Montgomery with dauntless eye, and cheerful, elevated tone—

“Is not this a bower of enchantment, Montgomery?”

“Yes—and are you come here to play Rinaldo in this bower of enchantment?”

Zaira was standing with some friends at a small table, covered with illustrations in the most expensive style of modern decoration, and showing a beautiful edition of Horace (Wakefield's,) whose frontispiece represented the Bard with his lyre, surrounded by Nymphs and Muses,——

“Here happy Horace tuned the Ausonian lyre!”

said Zaira, as she pointed to his happy figure, that was displayed in an attitude announcing, with felicitous retrospective

intention, the mixture of voluptuousness, indolence, and genius, that characterized the writer, who, at one time, is accused by his friends for not writing more than four times a year; at another, humorously satyrizes his book for its ambition of popularity; is always a lover of the country (*ruris amatorem*), yet always involved in the bustle and clamour of Rome, plunges into every depravity of luxury, and is, even in his adored villa, for ever singing and drinking—*sub arcta vite bibentem*; yet wishes himself born at that heroic period, when (if he had been born) his first and last sighs would have been exhaled at the *Templum Vagitale*, and “the world had wanted many an idle song.”

“This,” said Zaira, pointing to Banier’s Ovid, with its splendid sculptures, “this is one of my favourite writers.”—(“How does she like his *Ars Amatoria*,” thought Montgomery to himself, parenthetically.)

"His landscapes are always graphio ; when
I read him I feel,

'Sunt rustica numina, Fauni,
Et Nymphæ Satyrique, et monticolæ Sylvani.'

His imagination fills all the landscapes of Greece and Italy with its brilliant population, and inspired our great Milton with the magic that enabled him to raise a Comus and a Sabrina amid the woods of Ludlow Castle."

One of the company "spoke on that hint," and talked of "*gigantesca sublimita Miltoniana*," as sonorously as Algarotti himself.

"It is singular," said Montgomery, "that the classical satyr and the Christian demon should have exactly the same appearance."

All turned and stared at the odd, but just remark ; and Zaira was pointing to Scott's description of the "Coir-nan-Uriskin," to justify the observation, when she

was led back again by De Courcy to classical subjects. With light and graceful, but steady steps, she traversed the fairy ground of classic mythology, and touched on the close affinity of its elementary topics to the Mosaic theology. De Courcy lifted his proud appealing eye to Montgomery. Montgomery listened, while she traced the difference between the simple sublimity of the description of the Deluge in the Mosaic history, and the puerilities, the affectation, the conceits of the classic authors on the same subject, from Horace's

" Omne cum Proteus pecus egit altos
Visere montes ;
Piscium et summa genus hæsit ulmo,
Nota quæ sedes fuerat columbis,"

to Ovid's—

" Mirantur sub aqua lucos, urbesque domosque
Nereides, silvasque tenent delphines, et altis incursant
Ramis, agitataque robora pulsan"—

down to the flat iteration of

"Fulvæ voluit anda lepores, unda vehit tigris."

"But," said Montgomery, "don't you think there is strong and just description in the line following—

'In mare læcatis volucris vega decedit alis.'"

"By Heaven!" said De Courcy to himself, gnawing his underlip, "he delights in contradicting her."

"I feel in those descriptions nothing so strong," said Zaira,—*"nothing of that circumstantial evidence that the mind demands to reconcile itself to events that terrify incredulity. When Lord Byron tells us,* that, on the extinction of the sun, the noxious animals wandered among the dark-*

* A gross anachronism—*transit cum asteris.*

ened habitations of men, 'hissing, but stingless,' I no longer float in uncertainties ; the mind fixes its anchor in one terrible fact, and I almost believe myself present at such a period."

(" No matter if you were," thought Montgomery to himself.)

Montgomery's last quotation of "*latens decidit alis*" had, in the mean time, given the hint to some talkers of the party, and they were off at a tangent on the albatross. That brought on Wordsworth's Ancient Mariner, where the crew of a goodly vessel all perish because one of them with

" His cross-bow did shoot an Albatross ;"

That brought on the Green Bird of Paradise, in Thalaba, who had a human meaning in its eye ; so on to the Simorg who dwelt at Kaf ; to the birds who are linked by a hook and eye ; to the footless fowl of heaven ; Wilkins' feathered women, and Southey's Glendoveer, &c. &c. till they

fairly found themselves lodged with a Phoenix on the top of a pillar in "Egyptian Thebes."

In the mean time, Zaira, De Courcy, and Montgomery continued together; the latter watching, almost maliciously, for some developement of sentiment or character that would force open De Courcy's eyes. He expected, and almost wished, every moment, that she would commit herself by some sneer at revelation; some sceptical remark; some deference to French atheistical writers; or, at least, that she would go out of her depth in the stream of sentiment, and after vainly dabbling about in metaphysics to save herself, fairly go to the bottom.

No such thing. She passed on in unblenched majesty, and she did not utter a sentence which might not have been quoted as a proof that her principles of morality were as pure as those of her critical taste.—Continuing the subject of their late conversation, she spoke of the voluptuousness,

selfishness, and worldliness of the character of Horace, with obvious dislike, as if the character resembled some she had encountered in life.

“The great defect,” she observed, “in the ancient writers, was their want of sensibility.”—(“Now for it,” said Montgomery to himself—He was disappointed.) “Their pleasures,” said Zaira, “are all physical; they never speak of the enjoyments of memory, or of music; their unfortunate mythology shut out that view of a future state, which alone can give dignity to our recollection of the departed; and their melancholy seems the depression of a libertine in the intervals of his indulgence, not that sublime feeling inseparable from genius, which is at once its reward and its punishment.”

“They had, at least,” said Montgomery, “an enthusiastic sensibility of rural pleasures; and where such sensibility exists, the taste is seldom wholly depraved.”

Zaira smiled. “Even in that enthusi-

asm I trace rather the love of enjoyment than the taste for nature; enjoyment almost wholly *corporeal*. The natives of a glowing climate, they speak with fondness of shades, because they shelter, and of waters, because they refresh them. Horace's preference of the country is defended by a reason that suits a valetudinarian better than a poet; and the bare absence of the mention of moonlight (that light of the heart) in their writings, forbids me to think that their sensibility of nature was profound."

"Horace mentions it," said Montgomery, (who was in a bad humour because he had nothing to find fault with,) "in his beautiful vernal ode, 'Diffugere Nives.'"

"Yes," said Zaira; "but he sees only nymphs dancing by it, images of gaiety and pleasure."

And as she continued to speak, blending enthusiasm with critical taste, and enriching ancient literature with the diversified images and multiplied materials of modern

poetry, De Courcy rapturously applauded, and Montgomery reluctantly approved; and the former compared her, in his imagination, to those waters sprinkled on the ancient paintings of Herculaneum, whose affusion restores to their colouring, for a few moments, all its primeval beauty. "Which of the ancients is your favourite?" said she, to De Courcy.

"Virgil," was the answer; one lay on the table, and Zaira proposed their trying the *Sertes Virgilianæ*. Montgomery declined it. He thought it superstitious, and even profane, though he was ashamed to say so. Zaira opened at the ominous passage—

"Vixi, et quem dederat cursum fortuna peregi
Felix, heu nimium felix si——"

De Courcy opened on the lines—

"Eja age, rumpe moras,
Varium et mutabile semper femina."

Montgomery, on pretext of looking closely at the lines, held his pointing finger strongly on them, and fixed a searching gaze on De Courcy. Zaira was silent. De Courcy, ashamed of the effect this trifle had produced on him, began to relate the story of Charles the First and Lord Falkland, having tried the *Sortes Virgilianæ*.

"Yes, and I remember the event corresponded with the prediction in the cases of both," said Zaira; and this remark did not seem to dissipate the effect of the experiment.

Their attention was called away, fortunately for De Courcy, who could not bear the inquisition of Montgomery's looks, by a beautiful alabaster vase being brought in, which had been sent from Florence to Zaira. Many and eager were the debates on the subject of a groupe of figures in *alto relievo* that embellished it. Zaira, after some examination, proved that it was the adventure of Psyche after being deserted by her

lover ; and while the antiquarians went off in Platonics about divine love and immortality, and souls and butterflies, and such "branches of learning," Zaira fixed De Courcy's attention on the beautiful melancholy figure of the abandoned Psyche. De Courcy gazed on it in silence ; the emotion that he felt at a resemblance it suggested deprived him of all feeling of admiration, all power of praise. Zaira observed his altered expression.

"Can you trace a resemblance between that and any figure you have seen?"

"*He can,*" said Montgomery, almost triumphantly.

"She must be very lovely and graceful," said Zaira, looking herself with unenvying loveliness on the figure.

"She is," said Montgomery, pursuing his triumph, "as lovely, as graceful, and as pure as that alabaster figure;" and as he spoke, Milton's image rushed on his mind:

"A rock of alabaster piled up to the clouds,"

"Vous parlez avec beaucoup d'onction," said Zaira, smiling. "What says Mr De Courcy?"

De Courcy said nothing.

"I myself," said Zaira, "am struck with the resemblance between this figure and that of Ariadne, in a painting you have not, I believe, yet seen. Allow me to show it you."

She passed on before them, taking a branch from the table to shew the painting. De Courcy, pausing, fondly pointed out to Montgomery the exquisite grace of her parting figure and uplifted arm, as she glided with attractive majesty before them. Montgomery, with his head turned over his shoulder, and his last looks fixed on the vase, only repeated, "Psyche abandonnée," and followed.

"What a perpetual fountain of domestic sweets," whispered De Courcy, pressing after her, "is found under your roof—in your presence—from literature to its most exqui-

site illustrations by the arts. I am ignorant, I know not how to express myself; but I feel I am in Paradise."

"I would wish," said Zaira, with one of those brilliant smiles that reflects the sunshine of a happy heart, "when you, I mean when my friends are here, that every hour should be marked by a new enjoyment, as some have contrived to measure their time by flower-clocks, whose bloom and fragrance succeeding each other, are their only marks of time." As she spoke, she stood opposite the fine painting of Ariadne deserted in Naxos;—"It is a French painting," said Zaira, "of the modern school; and in spite of all that Stewart has said, perhaps too justly, of 'marble flesh, drapery of satin spar, and the moonlight streams of milk,' I must think it a fine one."

And, her imagination led from the arts to literature, she repeated, with thrilling pathos, the beautiful lines of Aspasia, in Beaumont and Fletcher's *Maid's Tragedy*;

———This false smile was:

Well express'd ; just such another caught me !
These colours are not dull and pale enough
To shew a soul so full of misery
As this sad lady's was. Do it by me,
And you shall find all true but the wild island.
Suppose I stand upon the sea-beach now,
Mine arms thus, and my hair blown with the wind,
Wild as that desert ; and let all about me
Tell that I am forsaken.——

———Strive to make me look

Like sorrow's monument ! And the trees about me,
Let them be dry and leafless ; let the rocks
Groan with continual surges ; and, behind me,
Make all a desolation.

Zaira acted these lines as she spoke them, and one would have imagined there was something like a prophetic feeling in the bottom of her heart. The light fell full on the painting as she spoke ; every one was gazing on her. Montgomery kept his eyes fixed on the figure of Ariadne. There was no theatrical exaggerated French expression in the painting, Ariadne, a striking

likeness of the Psyche, appeared broken-hearted, submitted, forsaken. Not even the exquisite lines of Beaumont, aided by Zaira's magical recitation, could give a stronger representation of all that a woman feels on the desertion of her lover, and all that feeling she sinks under, than this solitary figure.

"It is a striking likeness," said Montgomery, in a tone that could not be mistaken.

"Of whom?" said Zaira.

"Of the lady," said Montgomery, apparently whispering Zaira, while his eyes were strongly fixed on De Courcy—"of the lady Mr De Courcy is engaged to."

"Allow me," said one of the company, advancing to Zaira, "to take the branch from you; you must be quite fatigued holding it."

"Not at all," said Zaira, mechanically, and she retreated.

Through her rouge no unpractised eye could trace emotion ; but the revulsion of her features, the instantaneous whiteness of her unpainted lips, the subsiding of her whole figure, a moment before elated, buoyant with dramatic emotion, and conscious of applauded talent, were clearly seen, and strongly marked by Montgomery.

De Courcy, who had not heard Montgomery's words, approached her with a glass of water ;—she gently waved him off. He spoke some words to her in a low voice. She only bowed her head in answer ; and a few minutes after, while the company, after a debate on Murphy's *Phœdra*, the only modern play that has attempted to record the misfortunes of *Ariadne*, all gathered round a young man of great humorous talent, (as it is called) who was singing the mock bravura of *Ariadne*, in Lewis's *Adelmorn*, she glided away. The conver-

sation soon languished, and the party separated in groups.

De Courcy, oppressed, agitated, and miserable, wandered from them without knowing where he went. He rested his burning temples for a moment against the pilasters of a small door that opened into a room filled with flowers, and wholly without light. He believed himself alone, till he heard an audible sigh near him. He advanced, and Zaira's white drapery gleamed among the flowers by which she was surrounded. He was at her feet before he felt the impulse that brought him there. The time, the place, the feelings that tore his heart, and made it feel alternately a desert and a paradise, gave him now a boldness like frenzy. He cared not what was thought, if *he* was but allowed to tell all he thought; in a paroxysm of feeling, half selfish, half-desperate, he wished to be heard, and to die. He seized her unresisting hand;

—unchecked, he pressed it to his burning forehead and lips ;—unrebuked, he covered it with his kisses and his tears. Zaira, shocked, attempted to withdraw her hand ; he held it more firmly ; and at this moment, her repulsive motion, his own invincible timidity, left him without power to utter a word, but what belied his feelings and his situation. His language was only that of an inexperienced boy apologizing for intrusion, not pleading for and from the heart. “ Zaira, are you offended with me ? Do not be offended. The happy hours—the only happy hours in my life—the elysian moments that I have passed under your roof—in your sight—the intellectual existence—Oh, Zaira, it is only you have made me feel myself a thinking being ! and if you are offended with me, if you drive me from you, I am annihilated, lost—nothing.—No answer ? Zaira, speak to me. Only tell me you are not angry

with me. I was a wild thoughtless being—I never knew happiness till I knew you.”

“ Stop—stop,” cried Zaira, vainly struggling to extricate her hand.

“ No—never—never, by Heaven!—I was a neglected, overlooked being. You, you alone—you have awoke me to happiness—to life. Will you cast me off now? Oh, Zaira—angel—friend—more than all—woman—regenerate me by your genius—make me worthy of being your pupil—of sitting at your feet—of kissing them as I do now, with my heart prostrate before them. Zaira, will you not raise me? You weep—Good God, are these your tears dropping on my hands? and have I—*have I*—Oh, Zaira, drops of life!—Blood drawn from my heart would not give me such anguish.”

Zaira collected herself. She calmly repelled him; and fixing on him eyes, which burned in the darkness around them, said,

with apparent calmness, and smothered feeling, "Why did you not tell me this before?"

"This—*what*?"

"May I not see your beautiful bride?" said Zaira, pride lending her voice a forced unnatural calmness; then her feelings overpowering her, she added, "Why may I not see her? I will bless her—love her—love her for your sake, dear—dear De Courcy!"

"Dear—dear De Courcy," repeated the intoxicated boy. "*Was it you—you, that spoke these words, Zaira? Speak them again, if you would save me from*——

The voice, the warning voice of Montgomery, was heard from room to room, calling De Courcy, and exclaiming that every one was gone. Zaira rose, and was retiring; suddenly she returned, and placing within his hand a flower, whose name, it is said, in all modern languages, signifies "forget me not," whispered "*Ne m'oubliez*

pas," and quitted the apartment; the scene of a disclosure which both dreaded, perhaps as much as they wished.

END OF VOLUME FIRST.

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WOMEN;

OR,

POUR ET CONTRE.

CHAPTER I.

Postquam altos ventum in montes atque
Lustra——fulsere igeres——
Santoque ubalant vertice Nymphæ.

VIRGIL.

“**Y**ES, yes,” said Montgomery, after a long conversation with De Courcy, “yes; no doubt you *intend* to act honourably; but intentions are always the property of the owner, and actions are the property of the public. *Are you acting honourably—now—now—at this present time?*”

“I wish it were any but you that asked

me that question," said De Courcy, for the first time starting and striding away from Montgomery; his giant figure, burning cheek, and flashing eye, though half averted, enough to intimidate all but those who love danger for its own sake.

"And what answer would you return to him?" said Montgomery, calmly.

"Would you wish to hear?" said De Courcy, stopping short.

"Yes; for I would be glad to hear what answer would satisfy your own conscience. Of course, you would not presume to justify yourself to others by means that would not justify you to yourself."

De Courcy stopt in his haughty strides. He threw himself against the chimney-piece with a violence that shook the room, and terrified Montgomery. He remained rocking for some moments in the strong spasms of masculine agony, and then tears forcing their way through his closed fingers

and thick hair, that he had vainly dragged over his eyes, he sobbed audibly.

"De Courcy," said Montgomery, timidly; "De Courcy," he repeated more audibly, but without venturing near him.

De Courcy held out his damp, twisting, convulsed fingers towards him almost unconsciously. Montgomery started up, and caught them eagerly. "De Courcy, I saved your life once."

"Yes; you saved it *once*, to render it miserable for ever!" said De Courcy, sullenly.

"No: So judge me, God!—No, De Courcy, your happiness is as dear to me as your life. If either be dear to you, fly from this woman."

"Fly from her? and what then will be left to make life supportable?"

"Oh, De Courcy!" said Montgomery, retreating aghast, "are those your words, and is it gone so far?"

"It is," said De Courcy. "Till I knew

her, I never knew any thing. She fills all my mind, my thoughts, my imagination, my heart. She is capable of filling all my faculties; she is worthy of employing all my feelings. I would sacrifice all the remains of existence for one moment in her presence. I would exhale the breath of life, if I could, in one sigh at her feet. Her beauty—her graces—her talents—her virtues.—Yes; look not so incredulously, she must have virtues! Oh, Montgomery, don't look at me—don't speak to me. I am lost when I remember—I am more than lost when I forget her!"—

Montgomery burst into honest, and, as he thought, useful indignation. "You are raving, De Courcy; raving worse than you did in your fever. I almost wish you were in it again. A brain-fever, a typhus-fever, any fever for me but that of the heart. Her beauty—the beauty of a Parisian, a continental toilet, rouge and pearl-powder. Her graces—the graces of a green-room or

a theatre. Her talents—her talents”——
Montgomery paused, and muttered to himself, “Yes, I cannot deny her—no one can deny her talents. Her virtues—ay, let us come to the chapter of virtues. I admire her cambric handkerchief virtue, always in tears or in declamation. What act of honest, disinterested, unequivocal virtue (putting religion quite out of the question, as I believe it must be put in her case) has she ever shown? She is here a single woman. Do we know any thing of her conduct to her parents, to her husband, to her children, if she ever had any? Fashion and her great talents, which it would be absurd to deny, have brought her into distinguished notice. But is notoriety and talent (dramatic talent) the foundation on which a man would wish to rest his happiness? If he does, the man who built his house on the sands might be a Solomon to him. Such notoriety, such dis-

tion might do well to glitter round a mistress, and elevate a man's vanity and vices at once; but could I recommend a mistress to you, De Courcy? I who hoped"—(and Montgomery's former hopes rose to his recollection, and worse, they rose to his throat, and producing a sensation he always despised himself for, and felt more painful for the contempt he bestowed on himself)—"De Courcy," he added, with an effort almost convulsive, "I thought you ought to be—I hoped you might be the happiest of men. I sacrificed my own happiness to you, but I cannot bear to sacrifice the happiness of another."

"What do you mean?" said De Courcy, starting, and turning on him with newly-awakened consciousness.

"Nothing—nothing. Don't let us quarrel. I have risked my life for you; I will never risk it against you. I will not speak a word against that woman—that Zaira.

But what brought her here? Why did she come to make you miserable? You were happy before she came."

"Happy!" said De Courcy, with a look of contempt, which the indignant beauty of his features rendered sublime. "Happy—in the cant of a conventicle—or in Mr Wentworth's gloomy parlour listening to his extempore prayers, half technical, half borrowed, addressed to three servants fast asleep on their knees! I tell you, Montgomery, I felt a sensation of resentment, of oppression, of indignity I cannot express, the first night I ever was in a meeting-house. The people may be good, the preachers may be good, the doctrines may be good, but is it a life that man can support, who wishes—I know not what I wish—except—except" (he added, with furious boyish desperation) "that I were dead—nothing but"—and he paused, shocked at his own vehemence.

Montgomery remembered that this was

the man who, but a few months before, was actually on the verge of the grave, worn to a shadow, beyond all reach of medicine, from the force of *his feelings*. He felt at once that emollients, not corrosives, were to be administered; and he felt also, with the bitterest anguish of conviction, that this kind of periodical paroxysm was purely constitutional, and that De Courcy, imagining himself its victim, would sacrifice others to it who were innocent, and whom he felt to be so.

“I allow,” said he, in almost a temporising tone—“I allow that Mr Wentworth’s habits are not conciliating, and that you must have admitted an unfavourable view of men and things through the distorted view that has been presented to you. You do not know the real worth, the happiness, the excellence of religious people.”

“I loathe it all,” said De Courcy, rising impatiently; “my very soul loathes them.

Their prayer-meetings—their psalm-singings—(I beg their pardon)—I mean their *hymn*-singings—their dinners—their breakfasts—their hot cakes and hot disputes—their vulgarity—their violence—their pretended retirement from life to carry all its worst passions into their barren naked retirement—Oh, Montgomery! it is to me like Tasso's mad-house, without the genius that made its horrors supportable.”

“My dear De Courcy,” said Montgomery, grasping at an illusion for safety; “was it not misplaced passion that sent Tasso to a mad-house?”

“Yes—yes,” said De Courcy, sinking back into his chair; “and I shall soon be there. Oh, she is so much above me—she is—oh, she is so much beyond woman!—So much beyond!—Yes, Montgomery, I believe you have foretold my fate; I must go to a mad-house.”

“Well,” said Montgomery, trying to

smile, "before we go to the mad-house, suppose we go to Dominick-Street? you know you promised to breakfast there."

"Yes," said De Courcy, starting up, for the mention of an engagement happened that day to operate with punctuality on his associations; "yes, but I promised first to call at Zaira's, to ask, whether she intended to make the excursion she talked of into the county Wicklow to-morrow?"

"Well, well," said Montgomery, "we will go to Zaira's, as you call her, first."

"It is a delightful name," said De Courcy.

"Yes, a very delightful name," said Montgomery. "And we will call on the lady with the *delightful name* first; and then"—

"And then to breakfast with what appetite I may," said De Courcy, in an accent that bespoke no appetite for the breakfast.

They called in Sackville-Street, and then went on to Wentworth's. The fates seemed to have picked out the society that morn-

ing with *malice prepense*. Breakfast was half over, but Wentworth, Macowen, and the Babe, were all steeped in controversy to the very lips. The muffins had been swallowed wholesale, the eggs scarcely tasted, (though Macowen was a very good judge of eggs), and the tea drank scalding hot, in the rage of debate, and still it raged. Mrs Wentworth sat at her knitting, at safe distance from the field of battle, and Eva poured out cup after cup in silence. Macowen had been pressing the new convert for a test of his faith; for he had no idea of a man's having any religion unless he could specify it under a particular denomination, and signify his creed by a kind of free-masonic sign, technical and decisive. This the convert refused, it seems; and as the young men came in, he was bellowing, with a cup of tea in his hand, which he was spilling in the trepidation of his rage,—“No, sir—no, sir—never, never. I will neither be

Catholic or Protestant, Arminian or Calvinist."

"*Don't put Arminian first,*" said Mr Wentworth.

He went on.—"Neither Trinitarian or Arian—neither Universalist or Particularist. No, sir.—Sir, I will be a Christian.—Yes, I will be a Christian, (foaming with passion). I will—I will be a Christian." And his voice was actually a roar, and he thumped the table in the fury of his vociferation and the eagerness of his orthodoxy.

"Good God!" said De Courcy to himself.

Eva had retired to the window and taken out her work. He followed her, and gazed on her as she sat. On her celestial countenance there was not a trace of earthly passion. Her calm eyes turned now and then on the disputants when a word or tone of unusual harshness or loudness struck her ear with unavoidable dissonance, and then reverted to her quiet employment.

De Courcy looked long on her tranquil, modest, sacred loveliness, like that of some

“Youngest virgin-daughter of the skies.”

With her religion seemed to be an instinct, a part of her pure nature ; with the rest it seemed but a name. But as he looked, he thought he could trace something like a shade over her beautiful features, a depression of the eye-lids, a pensive and colourless relaxation spread over the whole countenance ; an expression that indicated sighs suppressed, and the thought wrung him with anguish. His eyes filled with involuntary tears ;—he could not bear his feelings. Thus a morbid sensibility is always sure to avenge its excesses on itself ; but it is not always the weapon that has wounded that can heal us, and we may shed torrents of tears without being able to dry one that we have drawn from the eyes of others.

Mrs Wentworth silently observed them both. "Open that window, De Courcy, if you please; this day is intensely close."

"And very dark," said Eva, looking up wistfully at the darkening window, as the clouds rising far above the verge of the horizon shewed themselves over the tops of the opposite houses.

"How still, and dark, and close, every thing is," said Eva, rising, and then sitting down suddenly.

"Was that a carriage passing?" said Mrs Wentworth; "I don't see one in the street."

"No," said De Courcy; "it was a distant peal of thunder, I believe;" and he leaned far out of the window to watch the appearance of the clouds.

Eva grew very pale. "Are you alarmed at thunder?" said De Courcy lightly to her.

"I am very much—'tis the fatal invin-

cible habit of childhood, the result of a fear impressed by servants ;” and, smiling faintly at her own weakness, she was quitting the room.

De Courcy tried to detain her ; strange to say, he was pleased at this discovery of her weakness. “ Suffer me to go,” said Eva ; “ why should I torment others with my infirmities ? I have struggled with it, but cannot subdue it—Why should I, by exposing it, run the chance of perhaps communicating what I feel to some other timid person, and make two wretched instead of one ?”

“ But, stay ; and I will reason or laugh you out of your fears—Believe me, dear Eva, they cost you too much, when you suffer them to deprive you of a spectacle at once so beautiful and awful—Oh that I were on the summit of a mountain now !”—And he tried to engage her attention and imagination, by describing those

regions where travellers see thunder-storms bursting beneath their feet.

"I will stay," said Eva, "to convince you that my fears are not artificial, and that I never yielded to them without the utmost struggle I was capable of."

She was interrupted by Mr Wentworth's loud, harsh, untuneable voice, "crooning" over some lines of Watts, *proper to be recited during a thunder-storm*.—

"We shout to hear thy thunders roll,
And echo to our father's voice."

—And, as he was shouting in loud echo, leaning magnanimously against the window, a strong flash of lightning struck directly across his sight, and, clapping his hands before his eyes, with an exclamation little short of profane, he hurried out of the room.

Mrs. Wentworth, without any exclamation or hymn-singing, or display of supernatural confidence, half-theatrical, half-affected, had gone to her own apartment to prayer; she felt the solemnity of the hour, and wished to improve it.

The storm came on indeed! De Courcy tried to interest Eva by the comparative descriptions of Thomson and Bloomfield. Thomson's barren generalities she listened to without any increased emotion; but when he came to Bloomfield's vital, *taken on the spot* lines—

“ With doubling danger low the tempest bends,
And thick and strong the sulphurous flame descends,”

shuddering, she implored him to stop. In a short time, her terrors were indeed beyond all reach of poetical consolation, and quite beyond the reach of De Courcy's sympathy or comprehension. The pitiless elements were putting her constancy to

the proof, and beyond the proof. She sat, for she had promised De Courcy to sit and bear it; and perhaps she thought that this effort (which it was agony to her to make,) might restore her some portion of his alienated feelings. She sat with white closed lips, eyes fixing in their sockets, and a rigid, featureless contraction of the face, which seemed to border on convulsion.

Between the deep-resounding peals of the thunder, not a sound was heard but the sudden intermitted vehement rushing of the rain, that forced down in sheets, smoked along the streets, or clattered on the drenched flags like showers of pebbles, and the rapid rush of a solitary carriage that was driven furiously along, the blinded and terrified horses testifying their involuntary horror by the speed with which they flew. Sometimes a passenger was seen—a hardy foot-passenger, pacing with

resolute, desperate quickness ; hat flapped, head bent down, eyes fixed on the ground to avoid the glancing lightnings. Even this soon ceased ; and as the storm increased, the storm alone was heard and seen ; the lightning not frequent, but with interval enough to allow fear its full gasp of anticipation ; blue and malignant, fearfully glancing through the darkened room, and obviously lingering with short quiverings on the metallic substances it encountered.

Eva marked her gradations of agony only by grasping De Courcy's hand closer and closer. The dews into which her own seemed dissolving ; the increasing rigour of the contracting muscles round her lips, and the short intense vibrations of her frame, made him feel hers were no affected fears, and his own increased every moment. He tried to whisper comfort to her ; he entreated her to listen to the faint receding sound of the last peal. " It murmurs," said he, " as if the chidings of the Almighty

were past, and the still small voice of his mercy was about to speak to us."

This appeal to her habitual feelings seemed to calm her; but as he spoke, the elements, as if in mockery, seemed to collect all their fury in a parting peal, and discharged it with an explosion that shook the house—the thunder literally seemed like artillery discharged from the roof over their heads. Eva, shrinking, contracting herself almost into nothing, clung to De Courcy, and buried her marble, convulsed features in his bosom.

He trembled, as he felt her damp clinging hands, but in a moment tenderness succeeded to terror; he remembered, that thus pale, thus cold, helpless, inanimate, she had clung to him the night (that mysterious night) he had saved her life. He felt even grateful to the elements, which a moment before he could have deprecated.

Her long, light hair (of a different co-

from Zaira's) diffused its golden luxuriance over his bosom; her white slender fingers grasped his with the fondling helplessness of infancy, and twined their waxen softness round and round them; her pure hyacinth breath trembled over his cheeks and lips. In clasping her closer to his heart, he felt something within his vest; he drew it out; it was the flower Zaira had given him the night before, and which he had placed there; *it was withered*; he flung it away. "Eva, Eva, my love—speak to me—the storm is over—speak—don't be so terrified—see the clouds are dispersing—don't tremble so, 'tis not the lightning that is gleaming round you—See, my love—it is the sun breaking through the clouds—Raise your head—no, don't raise it—recline it still on my breast—still—for ever, and for ever—Oh, my love! that terrible paleness of your lips, your cold hands—speak to me, Eva, my love, my only, only, only love!"

Eva heard him not: Her fears, derived from a feeble constitution, and aggravated by forced resistance, were too strong for her reason in the moment of trial—perhaps her heart had some share in those struggles that proved too powerful for her intellect. She was delirious; but the images that were always present to her mind prevailed in this moment of its alienation, and she uttered words that thrilled De Courcy to hear. “They say he will forsake me,” she murmured; “but you will not—no, you will not”—

“Desert you—never, never—May the lightning strike me first!—Forsake you—never, never—Eva, my beloved—beloved of my soul—Yes, warm your cold cheek on mine; yes, rest your dear, dear head on my bosom; do not let its beatings startle you—Yes, twine your lovely fingers in mine—It is a heart that loves you, yours is prest to; it is a hand that soon will be

yours you clasp—Why do your fingers wander so wildly among my hair, my love? one ringlet of yours is worth all that ever — And how often has this hair,” he continued wildly, “been damp with despair? how often has it been torn in anguish, since I knew Zaira!”

Eva revived, and her pure feelings acting instinctively, she started from his arms, and, still pale with terror, she tried to falter out an apology for her terrors.

“No,” said De Courcy, pursuing, and kneeling at her feet, “no, you must not fly me. This is a decisive moment—a moment that must end many struggles. Eva, already are you cold, already silent? Is it only in terror and danger you cling to me? Is it only in the terrible intervals of paroxysm and insensibility that I am ever doomed to feel your arms twined round me, to hear your lips utter my name? Already I see your countenance averted from

me, the moment it has the power to give a conscious look."

And so it was ; for Eva, trembling at the recollection that her arms had been thrown round him, sat abashed and confounded.

"Eva, I call on you passionately, solemnly. This is the crisis of both our destinies. Speak—tell me that you love—love me as I wish, as I demand to be loved. Bind me to you by an irresistible confession—Make me yours for ever. One word, one penetrating word of fire. One word of the language of the heart. Utter it, and bless me."

Eva, struggling between her timidity and her passion, tried to comply with his wishes. She searched her feelings, for something that might correspond with his. It was in vain ; her pure heart had not one image that reflected the ardour of his. Her lip knew no language that could answer him. Distressed and perplexed, she sat with distress and perplexity increasing,

anxious to give him some proof of her sincerity, but unable to give one that would satisfy him.

“Eva, speak, do you love me?”

“Have I not said so?”

“Oh! when we love, it is so easy to pour out the proofs with an overflowing sensibility; the heart luxuriates in those proofs of its being deeply touched; it is oppressed by its own fullness, and delights to communicate what it cannot bear undivided. If you loved, Eva, love itself would inspire you with involuntary testimonies; your very silence would be eloquence, nor would I have to kneel at your feet for a word in vain.”

“What can I say?” said Eva, his doubts becoming too strong for her fears; “is passion to be mistrusted, because its power renders us speechless?” And trembling at her own temerity in uttering these words, she became silent.

Was De Courcy satisfied with this de-

claration ? We know not ; for it is certain that there is an exaggerated sensibility, a sensibility that doubts its own truth, and is better satisfied with words than with things. It requires to be paid in its own coin, and would rather hear a florid sentiment than accept of the most perfect sacrifice. It is certain, however, that he was quite satisfied the next morning when he joined Zaira's party on an excursion into the county Wicklow, of whose beauties he was astonished to hear her speak with the accurate fidelity of an eye-witness. But astonishment, and every thing else, was lost in the gay tumult of preparation :

“ There was saddling and mounting in haste,”

barouches and four wheeling round in proud parade ;—the impatient horses biting the tight reins, and stamping with quivering hoof on the pavement ; and the drivers, proud of their impatience, manœuvring to

shew it off while they affected to restrain it; and there was young Longwood, proud of his elevation to the box of his mother's carriage, and eager to display his four-in-hand glories, and hurry along his screaming sisters, careless of their necks, or his own, at a rate that cleared the road to right and left for miles, and marked his track with a cloud of dust as long as a comet's train. And there were the female party, white-robed, in the light elegance of morning costume, standing at the windows, which, reaching to the floor, displayed their graceful forms leaning over the flowers with which the balconies were filled, to gaze at the beauty of the horses, or utter their conjectures on the weather. Montgomery was there too, calm, sober, and watchful, as if he had been at one of Mr Wentworth's quiet parties, reining in his horse, saying to himself,—“The event, the event; let me wait the event!” And, without a trace of disinterestedness or feeling in his

countenance or his manners, suppressing the emotions of a heart whose pulses now beat only for the happiness of others. He was particularly anxious that day for De Courcy, for he saw the homage paid to his vanity, and felt that it was more than enough to intoxicate a firmer head, and feelings less susceptible. His elegant graceful figure, displayed to full advantage on horseback—the mixture of skill, spirit, and courage that he exhibited, perhaps not without consciousness, in mastering a proud, fiery, beautifully-formed animal—the audible praises of the females, and the silent eloquence of Zaira's looks, as she gazed on him, and him alone, made Montgomery feel how trifles decide on the most important events of life, almost without our concurrence ; and as De Courcy displayed his graceful length of youthful limb, and the firm nerve of his vigorous arm in managing his spirited horse, he wished him any

where else, "to witch the world with noble horsemanship."

"Was it not," said Zaira, "from Alexander's subduing Bucephalus, that his father pronounced him capable of subduing the world?"

"Put me in mind, Caroline," whispered Miss Longwood, "to look out for Bucephalus in the Mythological Dictionary to-morrow."

The party set off, in the usual whirlwind of dust, wonder, suffocation, heat, and self-elation. Zaira smiled at the idea of a rural excursion undertaken under such auspices; but the noise, bustle, and velocity of the outset took away from her all thought but for De Courcy's safety. Elated by his feelings, by every thing around him, contrasting his former monotonous existence so strongly, and proud under the eye of Zaira of displaying that kind of courage which stakes life on a feat of dexterity; he rode

with the boldest, and seemed, by exposing his safety, to shew already that contempt for it with which his embittered and distracted feelings had inspired him.

In a short time they were in the country, and it was then that Zaira proved herself as superior amid the simplicity of nature, as she was amid the refinements of art. Her mind, like a fine-formed instrument, had room in its range for the touching melody of a ballad, as well as for the scientific combinations and ambitious beauties of a bravura.

De Courcy and Montgomery, who rode beside her carriage, listened with involuntary subdued delight. It was indeed such scenery that she was qualified to enjoy and to embellish—to enrich it by literary allusion, and illuminate it by a brilliant and delicate sensibility. The simplicity and fertility of her mind; the natural goodness of her heart, that seemed alternately

to receive and communicate happiness, and, like the statue of Memnon, to utter music when touched by the light of Heaven, made every step of their progress seem like the approach to Paradise. The placid, sylvan beauties of Bellevue, that seems like a young fostered darling of the mountains, that crowd around it to watch and cherish its loveliness—the wild and mountainous sublimity of Luggelaw, which De Courcy compared to the description of the happy valley of Johnson's Rasselas—all the magic of the Irish Tempe, the vale of Otoca, passed before their eyes, with that rapidity which perhaps increases our sensibility, by reminding us that the pleasures of existence are as momentary as those of sight.

They arrived on their return at the Dargle. Its deep wood (skirting a brawling stream, forcing its way through rocky banks, feathered down to its verge by trees,

whose picturesque shelter sometimes displayed its dark fretted waters, and sometimes veiled them in its drooping luxuriance) revived classical imagery in the minds of those who had leisure to recall it, and combined in Zaira's those national recollections which redoubled their associations, and deepened their delicious melancholy.

The party dispersed in different groupes ; the paths are very steep, broken by intruding roots of trees, bare of earth and mossy, and by masses of stone, that every moment remind one of their vicinity to the mountains.

The arms of all the gentlemen were soon in requisition to aid the faltering steps of the ladies ; and the party were soon divided by the thick interposition of the trees, the favourite points of view, the anxiety of some of the charmers to catch a view of Bray-Head or the Killina Hills

through the intersecting branches, that they might show their pretty necks in all their playful, partial, captious bendings, and of others to hang shuddering over the rocky channel of the river, clasp their white hands over their eyes with affected giddiness of terror, and lean on the ready-offered arm of some one to bear them away.

All this soon broke the company into detached parties, and Zaira and De Courcy were alone. He listened to her, while, her full melodious voice rising with her sentiments which expanded amid the loveliness of nature, she poured forth that eloquence of feeling that rested at the bottom of her pure heart ; that eloquence, which, combining poetry with divinity, makes inanimate forms the interpreters of Divine beneficence, and teaches man to look up from Nature to Nature's God.

She had never spoken thus solemnly before, perhaps because always surrounded

by triflers; but now, with Heaven and Nature alone around her, and De Courcy at her feet, the deep resources of her soul were awakened, and its sublime fertility—its elevated sympathy with the loftiest imagery, astonished De Courcy. It is certain, that when Nature is made the interpreter of Heaven, we listen to its oracles with a devotion that resembles instinct; and to see God in clouds, or hear him in the wind, to feel this *theology of the heart*, was not only congenial to De Courcy's imagination, but formed a delightful contrast to the gloom, the dogmatism, and the technical phraseology of a conventicle, and a sentiment of pride mingled with his deep feeling of attention, as he said to himself, "And this is the woman whom they believe to be a Being of this world—to be unsusceptible of that depth of sentiment that must be the foundation of true religion in every heart!"

Zaira, surprised at his silence, ventured

to enquire the reason. De Courcy almost involuntarily answered from Milton—

—————"The angel ended,
And in Adam's ear so charming left his voice."

—The voice of an angel could not be more delightful to Zaira's ear than these few words, borrowed as they were, commonplace perhaps, and uttered with the trembling accent—the diffidence—the blushing passion of youth, blushing at its own emotion.—Oh! how much more delicious is the first inarticulate murmur of love, with all its feebleness of expression—its poverty of words, and eloquence of blushes—its feelings, that disdain the medium of language, and trust their rich secret to the *respiration of the eyes*;—how much more powerful is its silent expression, than all that language can utter, or volumes contain!

Zaira thought so, and, happy and de-

ceived, (as all who imagine themselves happy probably are,) she trusted every thing to time, on whose operation, (trusted because unknown), both hope and fear are compelled to repose. She had little time for the indulgence of her delusion; for the Miss Longwoods came running down the hill, and announced the approach of a storm.—More of the party gathered round them with the same intelligence; the attention of all fixed on the ominous appearance of the sky. It was ludicrous to hear the selfish expression of regret, and something like reproach, as if Heaven was pledged for the happiness of the party, or as if the loss of one day's enjoyment forbid the hope of one more happy hour in life. The clouds, rising slowly above the Killina hills, soon spread far south; Bray-Head was enveloped from its summit to its base; and the long sweeping folds of leaden-coloured vapour passed from hill to hill southward, like giant spectres gliding over their

summits, and leaving the folds of their mysterious mantles lingering and darkening on the track of their progress. Sometimes they were suddenly withdrawn ; and the startling gleam of sudden sun-light that broke on the green summits, made even a frightful contrast to the darkness that was blackening and deepening in the background ; the Sugar-loaf-Hills, alternately covered and concealed for some time, were at last completely hid, and the ascending clouds hovered in a thick mass over the woods of the Dargle. The wind sunk ; the trees were motionless ; the birds flew low ; and a few thick drops pattered among the upper leaves with a melancholy sound.

The Moss-house of the Dargle afforded them shelter, till their carriages could be summoned ; but at the first peal of thunder, the Miss Longwoods declared they would rather die, nay, they *would* die on the spot, sooner than encounter the short walk to the gate, while there was thunder,

or even a *shadow of thunder*, in the air. So they all paused to learn their fates from the elements. The gentlemen looked grave and anxious ; the ladies crowded together, pale, with up-glancing eyes, and murmurs of terror ; among which the fate of pelisses, bonnets, and kid-leather shoes, had honourable mention and audible share.

Soon all these pretty murmurers were hushed. The thunder, that had rolled among the distant hills, burst in peals over their shrinking heads, prolonged, redoubled, aggravated by the echoes of the mountains ; the clouds, that had flung their fairy picturesque shrouds over the surrounding hills, now formed a dense, livid-coloured mass just above them, pausing in undischarged fury, more terrible from the suspension ; and the rain came dashing in, in fierce oblique torrents, through the open pillars of the hut, driving the shrinking females together, whose screams became more and more audible, as the strong red lightning

flashed in broad sheets above and around them, giving a terrible tinge to the woods, which, a few moments before, slept in their dark-brown solitary depths, which it appeared no light could penetrate.

The alarm of the drenched, terrified females became distressing even to those who affected to ridicule their fears. It was at this moment that the soft superiority of Zaira's character made itself manifest, without affected consolation of terrors she must have despised, or a vain display of her own indifference to them. She attempted to reason, where reason would be listened to, and to sooth, where it would not; and, on finding both efforts impracticable, she calmly advanced, with the hope of calming *them*, to the very entrance of the hut, and spoke with gentle, graceful confidence of the superior terrors and dangers of storms on the continent, which she had often witnessed; and she spoke of one in particular

at Rome, where the thunder-clouds, long suspended over the city, and streaked with lurid tinges of red, blue, and yellow, cast their terrible reflections on the ghastly upturned faces of the crowd, and made them appear like the faces of demons or spectres. She went on, and, excited by the attention of a literary man, was soon engaged in a discussion on electricity ; and as she watched the varying effects of the clouds while they collected, burst, and dispersed, her graceful movements, feminine amid conscious superiority, recalled to De Courcy's memory the image of the "presiding angel," shedding beauty on the storm it directs.

It was a fatal contrast for Eva, shrinking from terrors far inferior to what Zaira was voluntarily exposed to ; yet was Eva, with all her constitutional timidity, less interesting than Zaira, whose steady scientific glance was dissecting the rays of the flash, from which Eva had shrunk for refuge into

insensibility? He had not leisure to ask his heart, for Montgomery was near him, with well-meant, officious kindness, defeating the very purpose it laboured to effect, and forcing De Courcy to become the champion of the object thus elaborately, superfluously depreciated.

“There she is,” said Montgomery, “quite a female Plato on the promontory of Sunium, lecturing away amid a storm that terrifies every other female; look at that old, ugly fellow she is telling the story of *Richmann* to”—and Montgomery internally wished that Zaira might encounter the fate of the venturous scientific Richmann himself. “See how she extends her arm, with daring affectation, to mark the track of the lightning, while every female about her is trembling with fear.” De Courcy looked, “Oh, woman, woman!” apostrophized Montgomery, “true to the last, whom not even fear can make sincere, as vain and full of self in a storm as in a thea-

tre, and enjoying the rage of the elements that might crumble her to ashes, provided its terrors are pressed into the service of her vanity !”

“ You are as incapable as unworthy of judging her character,” said De Courcy, indignantly. “ By heaven ! there is a meanness of detraction about you that will make me hate you.”

“ Hate, but hear,” said Montgomery, patiently.

“ Oh, had you heard her !” continued De Courcy, “ had you heard, but a few moments past, the purity of her heart, the sublimity of her religious feelings,—that divinity of Nature, not of books, which is so profoundly felt, and yet so easily understood”—

“ Divinity !” echoed Montgomery, with coarse derision,—“ Divinity ! yes, I like to hear of the divinity of an actress. I beg your pardon, De Courcy, I mean of a wo-

man of genius. These women of genius, how they love to wander from the paradise of religion, and lose themselves in the desert of metaphysics. Oh, De Courcy, can you be imposed on by that mixture of intoxicated sensibility, and theatrical eloquence, that such women call religion ! I like such religion. They can fling themselves into a fine Madona attitude, hands clasped, hair dishevelled, streaming over their bare shoulders, tears of sensibility (it is a pity they are not tears of penitence) sparkling in a fine La Valiere style, in their black, blue, or green eyes ; but do they care a straw whether it is before a cross or a crescent, a Virgin Mary, or the Lama of Thibet, that they prostrate themselves before in their mock beauty of holiness ? Oh, yes ! I believe they would prefer the cross, from the prescriptive becomingness of nun-like costume. And can you be imposed on by this *religion of attitudes* ? Put her to the test. Let her

declare what sacrifices it has ever exacted from her, and whether they have ever been fulfilled? Has it obtained from her the sacrifice of one moment of her light, pleasure-loving life? ‘She who liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth.’ Has it extorted from her the sacrifice of one instance of personal vanity, in the decoration of her person, or the display of her talents? Has it induced her to sacrifice the gratification of her false sensibility (to give it no worse name) in her attempts to engage the affections of a man, whom she knows, who, she has been told, is engaged to another?”

“Your religion is always a religion of sacrifices.—Your deity is quite a Moloch,” said De Courcy, peevishly.

“And her diety,” retorted Montgomery, “I’ll warrant, is the deity of Pope’s infidel universal Prayer, “Jehovah, Jove, or Lord,” as the case may be; and her religion has but one easy duty, ‘to enjoy is to obey.’—

Oh, her religion!—Yes, put her to the test.”

“ I will ; and you shall be convinced *against your will*, unworthy as you are to be convinced.”

“ And of what consequence,” said Montgomery, too tenaciously, “ of what consequence is it to you or me what her religion is, or whether she has any religion or not—*cui bono* ?”

“ And if we are for ever asking that question,” said De Courcy, “ will we not ask it at last of life itself ?”

The storm had dispersed, and the Miss Longwoods came gilding towards them in tittering levity, just as absurd in their levity as their fears, and De Courcy felt relieved by their frivolity, that spared him Montgomery’s documents. They would have given him no pain, had he not feared them to be true, and felt an *ulterior* meaning in what he said. His mind, agitated by perpetual comparisons, began to hate the trouble

perpetually forced on him of making them. The image of Zaira was sufficient to give him delight, and on that he was satisfied to rest ; yet he thought, he felt, that Eva, shrinking, and pale, and clinging to him for protection, was a more interesting being than Zaira, steadily observing, and calmly reasoning on the storm. He had little leisure for further comparison ; the party were hastening back to Bray, where they were to dine ; and the Miss Longwoods, per favour of their terrors, had chained De Courcy to their barouche as fast as if his presence was a conductor.

When they arrived at Quin's Hotel, the crowd and bustle of the cavalcade completely filled the street ; and the tumult of waiters, servants, followers, and beggars, scolding, supplication, orders, and menaces, threw the weak girls into the most extravagant delight.

De Courcy, glad of trifling to escape from his own heart, increased their merri-

ment, by reciting Preston's mock-heroic description of an arrival at an inn :—

“ We rode up to that castle gate,
And knocked both loud and high,
The cook, with face as red as blood,
Came out immediately.

“ ‘ What want ye here, ye ladies fair,
And knights, so bold and brave?’
‘ We want our dinner, we did say,
And dinner we must have.

“ ‘ Set on, set on your largest pot,
And broach your ale and wine,
For in this very town, God wot,
We mean this day to dine.’

“ Oh, dreadful sound ! at which each goose
And turkey there did shake !
Of chickens in the coop, or loose,
The hearts it made to quake.”

Loud and long laughed the fair hearers ;
and their laughter was extended to an
Homeral, inextinguishable length, when,

lo ! among the groups that sturdily kept their place amid all the expostulations and angry jostlings of servants and waiters, and pressed their rags and wretchedness close on the averted eyes and shrinking forms of belles descending from their barouches, and beaux flinging themselves from their horses, a figure presented itself that checked their laughter in a moment, and weak and affected as they were, sobered them into real terror. It was a woman of gigantic stature ; her rags descending in shreds to the ground, but retaining, amid the utmost wretchedness, *something like a picturesque arrangement* ; her feet and arms bare, and some green leaves fantastically, and not ungracefully, twined among the coarse red handkerchief that bound her head, but did not prevent her long grey hair from streaming in lank ropes on her sun-burnt neck.

She was a beggar, yet she did not beg—she did not say a word. Her ragged competitors gave way on every side as she

stalked among them, with a look in which disdain, a wild humour, carelessness, and obvious insanity, were strangely mingled.

The Miss Longwoods made a precipitate, ungraceful retreat into the hotel at the sight of this singular object.

De Courcy was rivetted to the spot. It was *the woman*, the *very woman*, from whom he had rescued Eva but a few months past, on that eventful night that seemed every moment more and more to have the power of agitating, if not of governing his destiny. The appearance of this woman at this moment; the mysterious hovering recollections of that night, half lost in the delirium that had instantly followed it; her spectral figure and movements; the faint recollection of her terrible prophecy *that night*,—all rushed upon him at once. He trembled as he gazed on her. She passed him rapidly; and placing herself before Zaira, who was just entering the hotel, offered to tell her fortune.

Zaira shrunk back. De Courcy, with an indistinct feeling of her danger, rushed between them. The woman cast on him a look that seemed to say she remembered, but would not recognize him, and repeated her request to Zaira in wild but expressive language, far, far above her miserable appearance; language that strongly recalled to De Courcy's memory the words in which she addressed him that singular night. The party collected round, and Zaira escaped into the hotel. A few minutes afterwards, De Courcy and she, with some of the party, were standing at a window, and again, and audibly and earnestly, the woman repeated her request.

Zaira, terrified at her strange appearance, hastily threw her some money. She caught it up, she looked on it, flung it on the ground, stamped on it, and grinned with a ferocious expression of disdain, as she flung back her dark grey hair. "Well, I am not to tell your fortune then? That

smooth boy will tell it to you better than I ; ay, listen to him, listen to him ; sweet as he looks, and soft as he speaks, his tongue is on fire with lies. Oh, the hearts that heed him will be wrung one day ! Joy is on you both, like the summer now, and the grass is green under your feet ; but mind the time when no bird will sing for you, when you will wander like me over bog and mountain, the earth for your bed, and the stone for your pillow ; and *them* that follow you not letting you rest, and the sky dark over your head for ever and ever !” Her voice sunk in hollow mutterings, then she burst into wild madness of mirth—“ I must not speak, then I will sing. They cannot hinder me from that. I have sung to them that *screeched* to me, and the wind has been hushed to hear us.”

She began some words of a ballad in Irish, with a querulous, strained, eager voice, that if not musical, was melancholy. At some of the words she stopped with

a sudden agonizing start, as if a serpent had stung her ; but burst out instantly in English—

“ Oh, some they love for life, for life,
And some they love in death—
—But they love well
That love in hell,
And wed with their parting breath.

“ A bride has flowers to bind her hair,
Of red, and white, and blue ;
But the wreath that is tied
Round the locks of that bride,
Shall be dyed with the sulphur's hue.

“ Now wed her, wed her, thou gay bridegroom,
For the devil has toll'd the bell ;
Now long be your kiss,
And lasting your bliss,
For your bed is ready in hell.”

A wild laugh of horrible congratulation finished this epithalamium, that might have suited the union of fiends and witches,

or the more terrible nuptials of Incubi with their victims ; then, with exaggerated frantic spirits, she shrieked, " Neither my song nor my fortune-telling will please them now—Well, I'll try what my dancing will do—and yet it's all true—all true."

Reverting to the subject of her wild song, and lifting up her hands and eyes to the window, where Zaira stood transfixed.—" Often I dance when I'm mad—and often I dance when I am saddest ; and I'll dance for you now, as I do for them that sing for me when *you* cannot hear them, and grin and grind their teeth in my face when I have done, as you will do."

And, with incredible force and activity, and a wild mixture of self-derision, bursting through the miserable, conscious, degraded majesty of insanity, she twirled round and round ; her gestures not wholly ungraceful, yet fearfully desperate and menacing, like the ecstatic dance of the Der-

vises, or the Eblis invocation of the Sorceress in Thalaba;—her long hair streamed out; her rags whirled round her horizontally; her meagre, muscular arms beating the air.

De Courcy gazed immoveably—Zaira shuddered, but continued to gaze as if held at the window by the force of fascination. Young Longwood, who was in the room, was the first to break the spell. Cracking his long whip, with a sound that made the females start, he exclaimed—“She was a famous old quiz—the best thing he had seen that day;” and, leaning across Zaira far out of the window, he called on her loudly for another song, and threw out a handful of silver to enforce his petition.

The offer of money seemed again to operate with forcible punctuality on the associations of the maniac: She stopped instantly; threw up a terrific glance of scowling indignation at the window; and re-

tiring, seated herself sullenly on a stone opposite.

The other mendicants eagerly gathered up the money, and surrounded her with importunities that she would collect more for them—She was silent. The stragglers of the town then collected round her, some teasing, some abusing, some pretending to condole—all trying to shew that miserable superiority *over the mad woman*, which those who have the least share of intellect are always proudest to display. With stoical immoveability; with the silent, jealous cunning of madness, always exposing itself superfluously, but sternly refusing to *be* exposed, she continued silent, sitting; her withered hands, with their thick distended veins stretched over her eyes; her figure rocking in the restless vacillation of insanity; her naked discoloured foot beating time to some unheard tune, which her moving lips seemed to be forming, but not uttering.—No insult, no persecution,

no solicitation, could draw from her a single sound, or induce her to change her posture, or raise her head for a moment. The mob that had gathered round her, half in malice, half in curiosity, grew weary in time of her stern patience, and at length left her alone. Then she slowly retired—often casting back a look, not in fear but in wild inexpressible passion, on the place where Zaira and De Courcy remained. The shouts, hisses, and stares of her persecutors, she seemed not to regard; the feeling that had extinguished her reason, but still governed her existence, seemed predominant even in her last stage of degradation and misery, when she had been the laughing-stock of stable-boys and grooms; for, after tottering to some distance from the town of Bray, the madwoman was seen by some gentlemen to sit down by the side of the road, and take out from among her rags many pieces of gold, which, after counting over often, she gnaw-

ed furiously, as if to revenge on them the incurable wounds of her mind, and then hiding them, passed on.

The party at the hotel mean time went on like other parties, the ladies were full of their pleasures and their terrors. "It was the most delightful day they had ever passed, and the thunder was the most terrible they had ever heard. They would give *any thing* to pass such another day; they would *not take any thing*, and undergo again the terror they had suffered in the Dargle—Oh such thunder, and at so early a season of the year!"

Zaira was unusually silent, and De Courcy, whose mind was every moment recurring to the circumstances of real terror under which he had first met that extraordinary female, was pronounced that day, for the first time, to be "the most uninteresting abstracted creature that ever was—not at all fit for an excursion of pleasure—look-

ed as if he was always THINKING of SOMETHING,"—a crime which it may be presumed his fair accusers thought more heinous, from their being totally innocent of it themselves, no such allegation having ever been brought against them by the most malignant of their traducers.

The calm lustre of a lovely moonlight evening, was now inviting them home.—The events of such a day are very like the image of life; there was less bustle, clamour, and tumult, and *no expectation* in their preparation for returning; there was less anxiety for enjoyment, and more disposition for reflection. The minds of the majority of the party had little room for such a disposition; it found its place in those of Zaira and De Courcy. As the carriages wound slowly up the Killina hills, the beauty of the evening tempted the travellers to alight, and ascend the Obelisk hill on foot, while the carriages

proceeded by the road. Some of Zaira's servants, placed at the bottom of the hill, had musical instruments, and their sound, floating on the sea-breeze, and accompanied by the still rushing of the waves, seemed as if melancholy "poured through the mellow horn her pensive soul." It was a grateful contrast to the tumult and giddy gaiety of the day, and Zaira and De Courcy seemed to respire for the first time as they ascended the hill together. The laugh, the clamour of the party below lingering at the foot of the hill, or ascending to a short distance, and then giddily retreating, gave them only that pleasing disturbance, that faint reminiscence of distant existence, that those feel who have escaped from the conflicts of life, but sometimes pause to listen to the distant sound of its strife, and its pleasures.

Both of them felt the pressure of a secret heavy at their hearts, and both felt that kind of confidence in Nature, as if her

silence could disclose what their own lips could not utter to each other. There are situations in which we thus implore Nature to become our interpreter ; but does she justify the confidence we thus repose in her ?—It was a scene that seemed indeed to invite to profound confidence ; and when they reached the summit of the hill, they involuntarily paused, as if they felt the influence of the place. The moon had risen, but her light was still very faint ; it seemed like a bark, dimly seen in the blue depths of heaven, tracking its way with slowly-spreading light, and emerging on soft successive tides of cloud ; the whole scene was as aerial, as if those who viewed it no longer stood on earth. Beneath them, to right and left, lay the bays of Dublin and Killina, still as if in the first moment of their creation, before they had felt the rush of the breeze, or the ripple of the tide. The low murmur of the waves, that scarce reached their ears, seemed to send a

voice of deep, lonely tranquillity to the heart, where its tones were addressed. It seemed to say—"Listen to us, and be at peace." The grey hill, smooth to its summit, the rude obelisk against which they leaned, and which appeared rather like a thing placed there by Nature than by man, all around them seemed to mark the boundary between the world of Nature and of man. They felt themselves alone, and they felt, what those who love alone can feel, that such moments of abstraction are moments of the most exquisite enjoyment. Zaira, whom the view of Nature usually rendered eloquent, was profoundly silent, and De Courcy's heart was too full for speech.

There was no need to speak, had but the simple feeling of passion that filled both hearts required utterance, but with both it was complicated with many others. Each dreaded, that a word uttered by either would decide their destinies; each felt ready to sacrifice the world for the other, but

trembled to demand that sacrifice from any but themselves.

As they turned with inexpressible agitation to look on each other, to ask from the eyes that mercy which the lips refuse to give, the eyes of both were filled with tears. It is easy for the eyes of lovers to discover that humid brightness which tears give, and which *they* prefer to all the brightness of the orb that is drying up their existence. "And you weep," said Zaira; "this beautiful scenery," she added in a hurried voice—"this solemn light—how many recollections it revives!"

"No, Zaira—no—these tears—for I feel them—I cannot repress them—they are not drawn by recollection—*present* suffering presses too strongly on my heart to leave room for memory there.—Yes—I must—I must be sincere."—

"Sincere!" repeated Zaira, her cold hand shrinking from his touch.

"Oh, Zaira!" cried De Courcy in his

agony—"Why, why is there no language but that of *words*!—There is something at the bottom of my heart—something that scorches me when I feel—that chokes me when I would utter it—I know not what to say—I must—must—marry—and——"

"I knew this before," said Zaira, with unaffected calmness; "I heard you were to be united to a beautiful innocent girl—I have prayed for your happiness—You will be happy."

Her broken voice contradicted her words. At this appearance of emotion, De Courcy lost the little self-command he had—He would have thrown himself at her feet; at her feet he would have renounced Eva for ever that moment. Zaira, herself the most agitated internally, tried to calm him.—"Dear De Courcy, spare yourself—spare me—I would wish that she who has had the happiness, the distinction of casting a

passing light on your hours, should not see that light set in grief—Your wife will not deny me a right to your friendship—I will dare to say it to the purest ears—*I will merit it—I will merit hers*, if she will honour me with it—Oh, cease! cease, De Courcy!—Your burning tears deluge my hands—they deluge my heart—Listen to me—we have one opportunity of speaking to each other calmly;—in friendship, let us seek ~~our~~ consolation, and we shall find it—if—if,” and Zaira’s voice gradually lost its firmness, but retained all its expression—“if the most earnest—what shall I say—wishes for your happiness, your distinction, your—if my prayers, my tears—yes, my tears!—They are flowing fast, and warm as yours—feel them—*do I not feel them!*”

“And must those tears—those tears, (which I curse myself for drawing,) be all I feel?” said the wretched intoxicated boy, twining his arms round her receding form.

"Then, take this, and this, and this," answered Zaira, pressing her cold lips to the hands that she adored; "and let this spot, this stone against which we lean, testify, that here a friendship was formed, without one delusion of imagination that could flatter it with hope, one impulse of the senses that could degrade it in the eye of its sole witness—Heaven!"

The solemnity of her appeal could not subdue the burning pulses of De Courcy. He retreated from her, and pressing his lips, which he felt at that moment were unworthy to touch her hand, to the cold base of the obelisk, and pressing his forehead too against it to crush its burning throbs, he called it to witness their everlasting friendship—(How soon broken!)

* * * * *

As they descended the hill, De Courcy saw before him as plainly as ever he beheld

an object in his life, the figure of a female in white at the foot of it, approaching rapidly, with a gliding motion ; so rapidly, that, in a few moments, she passed him. Her dress was white, but not like any dress usually worn ; her face, as she passed him, was pale, colourless, and corpse-like ; the eyes and lips were closed, but the features were those of Eva. He trembled from head to foot at this figure, which appeared to him at the moment as distinctly as that of Zaira, whose arm he was holding ; but she, trembling from other causes, did not notice his increased agitation.

Once again he saw it. It was while he was assisting Zaira into her carriage ; it then appeared lying in the dust under his feet ; so obviously under his feet, that he started away to avoid trampling on it. Zaira then perceived his emotion, and enquired the cause of it ; but he made some slight answer, or evaded the question.

That evening Eva had found herself un-

usually oppressed ; so much so, that Mrs Wentworth pressed her to lie down on the couch after dinner, and shortly she fell into a heavy sleep. She had heard, in the course of the day, of this excursion, and it filled her mind even while she slept. She dreamed that she followed them to the country, but the scene soon changed to a desolate, bleak moor, where she wandered, her feet sinking at every step, catching faint glimpses of their figures through mist and rain, and calling after them, with a voice that sounded in her own ears so feebly, she felt it never could reach theirs. Suddenly she saw them at the top of a hill, on which the moonlight fell ; she attempted to ascend it ; and at last, with those heavy efforts so common in dreams, succeeded ; but when they met, she felt herself compelled to glide past them, without saying a word.

The rest of the dream was equally confused and dreary. At last, one distinct image of inconceivable distress occurred to

her. She thought she was lying in a road, over which carriages and horses were passing rapidly, without her having the power of getting out of their way. At last, De Courcy appeared at full speed approaching her; she struggled to move, but could not. The agony of her dream then became unsupportable, and she awoke, exclaiming—
“Do not let him trample on me!”

It is singular, that the date of her dream should be precisely the same with that of the appearance of the figure which De Courcy saw on Killina.

CHAPTER II.

L'amitié est l'amour sans ses aîlées.

ZAIRA, her heart full of joy and fear, wrote the next day to Madame St Maur.

“ Congratulate me, dear Delphine, on the conquest I have obtained, not over another, but over myself; the only conquest, perhaps, on which we have a right to be congratulated.

“ My mind, since the discovery of the loss of my only child, the only hope that sustained my existence through years of unexampled struggles and sufferings, seemed to wander through a dreary vacancy, without ground to rest on, or light to direct it. The dove was sent forth from the

ark, but there was no green leaf to be found, and she returned to her prison. Is it in this sterility of the heart, that the imagination becomes unusually fertile? or are we, like the hero of the Arabian tale, for ever opening the thousand doors of hope, one of which expands instinctively when another closes? I have certainly felt something to interest me in life, at the moment I believed its interest to have ceased for ever. I have met with a youth, timid, beautiful, and possessed of talents of which he is unconscious; of feelings, of which I shall never teach him the consciousness.

“How often! oh, how often! gazing on his perfect form, have I wished, that, if it were possible, such had been the child I lost, such were the child I found! It is impossible, I feel, for the heart long to be vacant. One image filled mine for many years, and the very length and intensity of those feelings created a habit of the heart, which it might have been fatal to my ex-

istence, or my reason, not to have indulged. I feel that something also is owing to my talents;—talents suppressed prey on the mind like misfortune. For many years their public exercise, excited by brilliant success, and sustained by the delicious hope of procuring for my child a noble independence, supported me from a motive, which, if mixed with pride, was yet not wholly illaudable.

“ All this hope ceased at once and for ever!—I shall never appear in public again; and those powers would now become a burthen to me, unless they were exercised for the improvement of some interesting individual. I feel, Delphine—already I feel how delightful it is, instead of performing before a crowded, tasteless audience, who applaud from prescription, and who would as soon kill me, *pollice verso*, if fashion gave the signal,—instead of this dazzling, dull existence, whose monotony I have felt at my heart, even when my ears were stunned

by bravos,—instead of this, to retire with one pupil—a pupil of the heart, to enlighten him with literature ; to soften him by refinement ; to combine and harmonize those fine, but broken chords that are scattered through his heart, and be luxuriously rewarded by the sparkling intelligence, the awakened sensibility, the *gratitude of the eye* that speaks to the heart, and is satisfied with the silent eloquence of its answer.—I am happy—unspeakably happy,—without a fear of the diminution or interruption of my feelings.

“ I have a security in our mutual circumstances that would satisfy the jealousy of the most worldly-minded of my judges, if I could ever submit to be judged by such. Long struggles and great sufferings give us a kind of credit with the world, and those who have had misfortune, feel as if they derived from it a right to act like those who had experience. I feel justified in availing myself of this terrible immunity, and I

shall not decline the privileges with which it has invested me. My misfortunes have all arisen from my acting compulsorily by the will of others. I will try to obtain happiness by acting purely from my own.

“The friendship, which will be the charm of my future existence, will be purified and ennobled by the certainty that the object of it is devoted to another, to whom he will shortly be united; and the security which is enough to satisfy my own heart, I do not hesitate to offer to the world, careless whether it will accept or reject it.

“But if the world could ever read a heart, the innocence of mine would astonish and convert it. At this moment, my whole pile of future happiness rests on the foundation of theirs—Yes, of *theirs*. To see two beings, equally amiable, *equally beloved*, enriched by my fortune—improved by my talents—and elevated by the distinction which I have

not dishonourably attained, would be not only beyond all I have ever enjoyed, (alas! that has been but little hitherto,) but all that I have even conceived. I shall feel like the happy genius, who constructed a palace of gems for the favoured Aladdin and his bride, and then was seen no more.—Pure benevolence is the pleasure of angels, and my benevolence is certainly *pure*.

“ ZAIRA.”

Madame ST MAUR'S Answer.

“ My beautiful Zaira,—Hark, whisper, a whisper (thanks to letters) may travel from Paris to Dublin—You are in love, Zaira—in love—Believe me, love always approaches in a mask; I forget what mask he approached me under when I married first; but I know the mask was soon

thrown aside—and—I saw no Cupid beneath. The ancients painted him sometimes disguised under the helmet of Mars, he seems to be stealing on you under the ægis of Minerva; but under whatever disguise he comes, remember he is an impostor!

“ You talk of the security which your mutual circumstances give you—fatal, fruitless security—no woman ever talked of the security of circumstances, till she felt the want of security in her own feelings and principles. This is a mere ranting sacrifice to Jupiter Pistor, when you have not a loaf of bread more in the garrison. You are in love, Zaira; in love! I pronounce it by all the deadly, indelible symptoms of that most deadly of diseases. You speak of the sentiments of the world with contempt already. Alas! *friendship* never inspired such heroism. Why should a woman despise the world? I never knew one who began by despising the world,

who did not end by being despised by it. The world, after all, is generally very much in the right ; and till another can be found to live in, (which is quite hopeless since the death of Archimedes, who offered to move it if he could find another place to stand on,) I am quite content to abide by its decisions. Oh ! my charming Zaira, recal yourself from this fatal enthusiasm ; love, under the name of friendship, has broken more hearts, than love in its own name has ever made happy !

Your talents want employment—Well—Establish *les Enfants trouvées* at Dublin—Visit it—Comb all the children's dirty hair on your knees every morning ; wash their faces ; hear them their prayers, if they know any. Exhaust your sensibility any way but on love. Ah ! my charming Zaira, I am as jealous of your sensibility, as Madame de Sevigne ever was, or pretended to be, of her daughter's beautiful figure, when she was so angry at her lying-in twice in

two years.—Do any thing—every thing to employ your mind; and believe me it is better your talents should slumber from exhaustion, than that a heart like yours should ever be awakened.

“ You know I speak disinterestedly. M. de Viosmenil has seen you—and lives.—*Adieu!*—I hear the rap of Maman’s cane for her coffee. No news from Paris, except that the Empress has been heard to call the Emperor “ *Mon amour!* ”—that the king of the Romans is the most beautiful creature in the world—and that the hats are higher than ever—absolute balloons!

“ We hear nothing of politics, nor ever shall perhaps, till we hear them from the mouths of the cannon of the allies,—the last vehicles of public intelligence which I should wish to attend to. There are evil-minded persons, who pretend to say we shall hear them soon. When they talk

thus, I shrug my shoulders, and "*apres nous la deluge.*"

" Adieu,

" DELPHINE ST MAUR.

" *P. S.*—The hats are a little lower since I began to write, and the flowers worn a little more to the side. What can this mean?—but I am not fond of tracing effects to causes."

For many days Montgomery had been labouring, with laudable jealousy and pardonable malignity, to *commit* Zaira, if possible, with De Courcy ; to trace some sentiment, or shadow or penumbra of a sentiment, that would alarm or revolt him ; or, better than all, to lead her by conversation to expose herself. Montgomery was sure she was an Atheist in heart, and a Latitudinarian in life ; and, confident that she would at some time or other betray herself as either, or both, he spared no pains to expedite the

consummation he so devoutly wished for ; but there was no such discovery to be made, and if there had, Montgomery was not the man to make it. To do him justice, he spared no pains ; he tried to pique her literary prejudices and national character, as he believed, by the most lavish abuse of the foreign writers, particularly the French. " If any thing ever made that woman sincere," said he to himself, " anger will."

Not the orthodox John Knox himself ever held a more merciless inquisition on the beautiful Mary, unmoved even by the tears of royalty and beauty, than did Montgomery. With honest spleen, and unmitigated perseverance, he read day and night works that he hated, and came armed to the controversy with all the thorough knowledge of an author that zealous hatred alone can give. And he spoke (and Montgomery could speak well) of the detestable gourmandism and heartless apathy of Madame du Deffand—of the frantie vanity of Rousseau,

who imagined, like mad Dennis, that sovereigns had nothing to do but to conspire against him ;—of his novel, the hero of which has no better proof to give of his passion than a resolution to drown his mistress (A pity he did not, said Montgomery, interrupting himself,)—And of his heroine, who had no better proof to give of her Christianity than to reject the assistance of a clergyman in her last moments, and finally die drunk ; and of D'Alembert and Diderot, and many more authors, “ whom the devil confound ;” and at last he came to the patriarch, the great Voltaire.

“ Oh, for words big with the fiercest force of execration,” as Mason says, to paint how he spoke of Voltaire ! He detected sundry errors, obvious enough, in his *Dictionnaire Philosophique* ; he impeached his veracity as an historian, derided his genius as a poet, and scoffed at his presumption as a commentator on Newton, even with Madame du Chatelet's name in the firm. Then he

passed on to his private life, (he had Grimm off by heart ;) his persecution of the young actress ; his mean frauds on booksellers ; his implacable enmity against the most candid of his critics ; his vanity, selfishness, and arrogance ; his intolerance of religion, more disgusting than the bigotry of its most intolerant professors, obtruded with such causeless, witless, impolitic frequency on his hearers, that, as Moore observes,—“ Men grew more weary of his stale jests against Christianity than of the dullest arguments in its support.” On he went, and would never have stopped, but to witness the effect of this tirade on Zaira. Hoping to see her either confounded or incensed, he “ checked his thunder in mid volley,” and paused, believing that her silence was only the suspension of a long-gathering storm.

Zaira was not long silent ; she spoke, and to his utter confusion, adopted completely his side of the question. She spoke

with honest, virtuous, English indignation, (as Montgomery would have called it, had it been expressed by another) of the foreign authors, and especially of the French ; speaking of them, her sentiments, her language, her very prejudices appeared English. She spoke of their vices, their vanity, their sciolism, their presumption, their infidelity, thinly disguised under the mask of fiction or of metaphysics, its broad hideous features (like those of Virgil's enlarging Alecto) for ever bursting and spreading beyond the ill-adapted, and worse-worn mask. She spoke of all this with an eloquence that amazed Montgomery, well as he knew her, and with a sincerity that amazed him more. Her wit, a thousand times more brilliant, and her satire infinitely more caustic than his, she turned the whole force of her keen and polished severity against the philosophical assembly at Sans Souci, and exposed to just derision a number of men affecting to be the moral and intellectual legislators

of Europe ; and when they met, engaging in such low squabbles, such mean jealousies, such degrading and disgusting contentions, (disgraceful to the dignity of a palace, and to the honour of literature,) as must have exposed them to the ridicule of all Europe, and to the everlasting hatred of each other — Philanthropists, philosophers, reformers, all *Daniels come to judgment*, as they were, assembled to determine on the future destiny of mankind, and the regeneration of the world, they departed ridiculous, exasperated, and degraded, heaping shame on themselves by mutual hostility, and agreeing in but one thing, their *hatred to Christianity*, to which their opposition thus became an honour and a support.

Montgomery was struck dumb for some moments, then he rallied and said to himself, “ this is all hypocrisy ; no woman dare openly avow her preference of Atheistical writers ; she either does not think at all on the subject, or thinks that not being able to

make *the worse* appear the *better reason*, she may as well adopt the better; or she thinks it will please that intoxicated De Courcy—or she thinks—curse me, “said Montgomery, swearing with irrepressible vexation—“if I know what she thinks, or what to think of her!”

He was resolved, however, not to shrink from the combat. There had been no combat yet, indeed; but he determined to force her to one, if possible. Her moral taste was unimpeachable; something might be gained by impeaching her literary taste. He was as weary of hearing that taste perpetually called classical, as ever the Athenian was of hearing Aristides called just.

So, on *the ancients* he fell with redoubtable, repeated blows, slaying them, like Sampson, by thousands, hoping that every blow went to Zaira's heart. He was by no means destitute of classical taste or sensibility; but feeling the high moral advantages of the moderns over the ancients, derived from

the power of revelation, he, in that point of view, hated the ancients with a hatred passing that of critics. He could not bear to believe that Christ, Confucius, and Socrates, were all to be named in a breath ; and his *views of preference*, perhaps, extended to the neutral, innocent subjects of literature. In this spirit he spake, and no one could stand before him ; and, concluded a vigorous philippic against ancient literature, philosophy, morals, with a round alarming assertion, (not the less true), that he thanked God he lived in days when Horace would have been hanged, and Juvenal, he hoped, at least, have stood in the pillory.*

The company who were present, whether they understood his allusions or not, certainly understood his strongly expressed indignation, and all were clamorous in defence of

* *Mille puellarum, puerorum mille amores, and passim.*—For Juvenal, *vide* the advice given in the sixth Satire.

the classics in a moment. Zaira placidly interposed, with intelligence superior, and self-command still more superior to them all. "But ought not every culprit," said she, smiling, "to be tried by a jury of his peers? The ancients certainly have a right to challenge their jury, when Mr Montgomery is the foreman. The ancients wanted that which the moderns may boast of, though the boast should rather increase our humility than our pride."

„What is that?" said Montgomery, eagerly hoping, since she had escaped him in the open stream, to catch her in the eddy.

"The *Bible*," said Zaira; the calm splendence of thorough self-conviction giving a lustre to her expression, beyond all that even the homage of theatres had ever, or could ever enlighten it with. "Wanting that, the ancients must have wanted, not only the sources of the profoundest sentiment, but the language of

the sublimest poetry. That book, which opens to man new relations between him and the Deity, opens to him new relations in society also. The beam of divinity trembles over the existence of man, and though life presents nothing more than a succession of dark tumultuous waves, their ridges, (under that glorious dispensation), as they successively rise and disappear, are tinged with a light from heaven."

After a long pause, she added, reverting to a subject of obvious comparison, "Instead of Spartan matrons, with blind and brutal ferocity, sacrificing their children to the preservation of a miserable, illiterate existence in a few acres of ground tilled by Helots, we now have Christian matrons devoting their children to God and their country, for the interests of humanity and religion; with more extensive views on earth; with sublimer hopes in heaven, than ever those unhappy beings could have known."

There was something of the sublimity of the sentiment she was developing which

communicated itself at this moment to her looks and her voice. "Instead of,"—she was proceeding with numerous instances which *comparative* history could amply have furnished her with, when the apprehension of its being too like a studied theatrical effusion struck her. She felt, too, there was not the same allowance for the superiority of females in conversation in Ireland that there was on the continent, and she paused in the parallel.

De Courcy cast an eye of proud and brilliant triumph on Montgomery.

Montgomery was silent. His own engines had recoiled back on himself. He knew not what to say or think ; and Zaira, who appeared to feel that much depended on this moment, pursued the subject, and her memory supplying her as rapidly with appropriate quotations, as her fancy with images, she opened Milton's *Paradise Regained*, and read that sublime passage, in which a comparison is made between the history, the poetry, and the theology of the

Jews, and those of the Ethnics, (a comparison for which Milton deserves some credit, as his attachment to the literature of the ancients must have formed nearly a balance in his mind to his favourite theology) ; and she passed on to Johnson's splendid testimony to the *necessary* superiority of modern writers on certain topics. "The ancient epic poets, wanting the light of revelation, were very unskilful teachers of virtue ; their principal characters may be great, but they are not amiable. The reader may rise from their works with a greater degree of active or passive fortitude, and sometimes of prudence ; but he will be able to carry away few precepts of justice, and none of mercy."*

Some female friends of Zaira's came in at this moment, and De Courcy and Mont-

* Johnson's Life of Milton.

gomery walked to the other end of the room.

"Now!" said De Courcy, his eyes adding volumes to the monosyllable.

"And now," retorted Montgomery, with untimely, unsalutary roughness; "what ~~has she said~~ but what all conversant with literature, as she is, might say? But mark me, De Courcy, it comes from her head, not from her heart. *To make Scripture a canon of criticism, is one thing, and to make it a rule of life is another.* The apostles were enabled to extort, from the devils they expelled, an acknowledgment of the power of Christ, but they were also desired not to rejoice that the devils were subject unto them."

"Devils!" cried De Courcy, with eyes of uplifted, unfeigned horror; "Gracious Heaven, may I be possessed by any devil but the stubborn unexpellible ~~dæmon~~ of religious malignity."

"There are dæmons who assume the

forms of angels of light," said Montgomery, "but they are not the less mischievous,"

"Mischief!" echoed De Courcy—"Oh, look at her, and connect, if possible, the idea of evil with her form! There is a morality in her very beauty, for the sight of her irresistibly fills one with benevolence and the love of the human species. Look at the smile with which she bends to those insipid women; the exquisite motion of her figure as she turns to speak to them. Oh, it is heaven to be near her! the very atmosphere around her is softened by her presence, the air is happy that she inhales."

"She is dazzlingly beautiful indeed!" said Montgomery with a sigh.

"And yet when she speaks," cried De Courcy, "I forget her beauty in the music of her voice. Listening to her, I forget even *that* in the melody of soul that flows from her lips—She lives only to alternate delight—a statue with her form would almost be a companion; but when

she unveils the sanctuary of her mind, even her beauty seems but as the porch of the temple to the worshipper—such loveliness inclosing such genius seems like *Homer in the splendid casket of Darius.*”

“What will she be next?” said Montgomery, sneeringly; “She has been a goddess; a temple; and a scroll of paper, in the last speech.”

“Her next change will be into an angel!” said De Courcy with fervour; “a ministering angel, while thou liest howling!”

“She is fitter for the houri of a Mahometan paradise,” said Montgomery; and, as he spoke, the loud declamatory voice of one of the visitors prevented any reply. She was telling a long story, with theatrical vociferation and action, all to the honour and glory of a dear friend of her’s, mixed with frequent appeals to Zaira for her praises. Her friend, the widow of a late dignitary of the church, had been left, it seems, with a large family of children in

very narrow circumstances, and had resolutely refused the offer of a wealthy relation, who was a catholic, to provide for two of her sons, under the apprehension that they might be induced to adopt the catholic persuasion, though she had been solemnly assured no such attempt would ever be made. "There, Ma'am," said the lady, proud of her friend, and proud of herself—"there is what I call religion, and virtue and conscience—and all that—that is what I call"—and she paused for want of a word to complete the climax.

"I am convinced," said Zaira, "that your friend merits every eulogium—but I do not understand distinctly"—

"Don't understand, don't understand, Ma'am? why, Ma'am, they would have brought them up catholics."

"And can no catholics then be saved?" said Zaira, with naivete. The lady was silent, aghast. "I cannot conceive," said Zaira, mildly, "that any parent can carry

her feelings for her child *beyond* its future destination. If she really believed that its future happiness would be forfeited by its becoming a catholic, I fear she merited the reproach, which she would be ready to utter against catholic bigotry ; if she did not, what danger in indulging the hope, that she might recognize her children in a future state of happiness, though they might reach it by paths nominally different from her own ?”

“ Pray, ma’am,” said the lady, (she was a very grave, stiff old lady, dressed in black silk, whose thick folds rustled like a storm at every motion) ; “ pray, ma’am, may I ask of what religion you are ?”

“ A Christian, I hope,” said Zaira, mildly.

“ Catholic or protestant ?—No offence, I hope ; I trust I am giving no offence, ma’am, by the enquiry.”

“ Not the least—neither, ma’am.”

“ Presbyterian, then, I presume ?”

" I have said I profess the Christian religion ; its various denominations, I conceive, are wholly unimportant."

De Courcy sighed ; Montgomery now threw triumphant glances in his turn.

" Pray, ma'am," said the old lady, with the air of an inquisitor, " may I ask what place of worship you frequent ?"

" I believe there is no place of worship I have not visited."

" Churches, and chapels, and presbyterian meetings, and evangelical preaching-houses," said the old lady with increasing emphasis of horror, her voice almost rising to a scream.

" Churches, chapels, and meeting-houses," said Zaira calmly, repeating the words after her, with all the docile simplicity of a child who was learning its catechism—" in many of them I have heard eloquence and genius ; in all of them religion, as pure as we can expect to hear it from the lips of man."

"It is a pity there is not a synagogue in Dublin," said the old lady, collecting the vast volumes of her immeasurable skirt around her, and seating herself three feet further from Zaira on the sofa.

"It is a pity there is not," said Zaira calmly; "it is a proof of the poverty of the city."

"Good God, ma'am," said the old lady, losing even her hardly-retained politeness at the retort, and in her trepidation scattering her ample pinch of snuff over the sofa of velvet—"Good God, do you regret the absence of Jews from Dublin—Are Jews Christians, ma'am?"

"They are human beings," said Zaira.

"Human beings—Oh, yes! that is the favourite language now, whenever any one is speaking of what ought not to be considered human beings at all—There are people who will talk that way of Jews, and Negroes, and Papists, and—oh, God bless me! is that a flash of lightning?"

"No," said Montgomery, raising one of the window-blinds, through which he had long seen a light reddening, spreading, flashing, and subsiding—"it is," said he, hesitating, "a fire, I fear."

He looked out again, and saw half the horizon in a blaze; "it is indeed a fire," said he, starting from the window, and catching up his hat.

"A fire, a fire!" cried the old lady, in a voice that might have alarmed all London in the worst stage of the great conflagration—"a fire; great God! how shall I get home—in what direction is it—how shall I get to my carriage!—Oh! Madame Dalmatiani, *why do you live in Sackville Street?*"

No one cared much how she got home; but De Courcy, naturally humane and feeling for age, had her carriage called, and put her into it, with assurances that the fire was evidently far distant, and

could not within the limits of possibility extend to Merrion Square, where she lived. The old lady heard him not: She struggled into her carriage with eager paralytic tremblings; and when the door had been twice closed on her black silk skirt, and twice opened to release it, she screamed out for her snuff-box, her *gold snuff-box*, *that she had left on the sofa where she had been sitting*; but her cries, inquiries, and lamentations, were lost in the speed with which her carriage whirled away.

De Courcy, as he rushed up-stairs for his hat, met Montgomery, and Zaira on his arm, at the landing-place. "Will you permit me to accompany you," said Zaira; "I will not render myself troublesome by my fears?" and De Courcy felt the difference between her and a female rendered troublesome by her fears.

"I have known," said Zaira, as they walked on quickly together, guided by

the horrible light that increased every moment,—“ I have known important assistance rendered on these occasions by mere presence of mind, without any physical force.”

Montgomery felt involuntary respect for her that moment ; he could not but value her magnanimity, but still he sighed. They were soon on the spot.

It was the dreadful fire that broke out at the druggist's stores in Castle Street ; crammed with combustibles, and as closely crammed on every side with buildings, whose every room contained a family. The best of it was, that it was not yet eleven o'clock ; the watch were all awake ; the police on the alert ; the military in the neighbourhood, so near the Castle ; and the families in the street were not retired to rest. All was life, though it was the hour of repose ; and all was light, terrible light, though the sky was as dark as December midnight. They attempted to as-

cent Cork-hill; that was rendered impossible by the crowd; and winding another way through lanes, of which the reader may be spared the names, they got into Fishamble Street. Many fearful intimations of the danger struck them there.—The hollow rolling of the fire-engines, so distinct in their sound;—the cries of “clear the way,” from the crowd, who opened their dense tumultuous mass for the passage, and instantly closed again;—the trampling of the cavalry on the wet pavement, threatening, backing, facing among the crowd;—the terrible hollow knocking on the pavement, to break open the pipes for water, which was but imperfectly supplied;—the bells of all the neighbouring churches, St John’s, St Werburgh’s, St Bride’s, and the deep tremendous toll of Christ-church, mingled with, but heard above all, as if it summoned the sufferers to prepare, not for life but for death, and poured a kind of defiance on the very ef-

forts it was rung to invite them to. All this came at once on them, as they entered Fishamble Street, from a wretched lane through which they had been feeling their way. They emerged from it; *and when they did*, the horrors of the conflagration burst on them at once. The fire, confined in the sphere of its action, amidst warehouses thickly enclosed, burst in terrible volumes above the tops of the houses, and seemed like a volcano, of which no one could see the crater.

On the steps of St John's church, a number were collected. They had snatched the furniture from their miserable lodgings; piled it up in the street, where the guard were watching it, and now sat patiently in the open air to see their habitations reduced to ashes, unknowing where they were to rest their heads that night.

All the buildings in the neighbourhood were strongly illuminated by the fire, and

still more strongly (though partially from time to time) by lights held out by the inhabitants from their windows, from the shops to the attics, six stories high ; and the groupes below flashing out in the light, and disappearing in the darkness, their upturned faces, marked with the shifting traces of fear, horror, defiance, and despair, presented a subject for Salvator. No banditti, in the darkest woods of the Appennines, illuminated only by lightning, ever showed more fearful wildness of expression, or more picturesque distortion of attitude. Just then the flames sunk for a moment, but, rising again, instantly poured forth a volume of light, that set the whole horizon in a blaze. There was a shriek from the crowd, that seemed rather like the cry of triumph than despair. It is certain, that a people like the Irish, whose imagination is stronger than any other of their intellectual faculties, can utter cries

of delight at the sight of a splendid conflagration that is consuming their dwellings.

The last burst of flames produced a singular effect. The buildings in Castle Street (below the range of the illumination) lay in complete darkness—darkness more intense from the surrounding light, and the tower and spire of St Werburgh's, (it had *then* a fantastically elegant spire,) by their height in the horizon, caught the whole effect of the fire, and appeared like a fairy palace of flame, blazing and built among the clouds.

They had learnt by this time that there was no danger, and little probable loss. The premises had been insured ; and those in the neighbouring houses had time to effect their escape, and secure their goods ; and Zaira, freed from all apprehension on account of the sufferers, and feeling her imagination strongly excited by the scene, was comparing it with the fires at Constantinople, where the terrible sound of “yangen-

vor," is echoed by the clattering of the iron poles of the guard on the pavement ; and she had got on to the description of that dreadful fire, which, acting in a semicircle, gradually drove the sufferers towards the sea, and enclosed them between the two elements ; so that they were scorched by the flames, while actually immersed up to their necks in the water to escape them, when she was startled by Montgomery's exclamation—" Good God ! and even amid a fire she can go on with literary allusions and, description, and such stuff." The words were not intended to reach her ear, but they did ; De Courcy heard them too, and, trembling with indignation, scarce could repress it, when a figure appeared that suspended every other feeling in a moment. It was that extraordinary female whom De Courcy and Zaira had met before under circumstances so singular and different ; the female from whose power (as it seemed) he

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had rescued Eva ; the female who had encountered them at Bray, in despite and in defiance of the police and magistrates, who opposed and remonstrated ; of the guards, who threatened and presented a formidable but vain obstruction ; and of the crowd, who threatened her with suffocation at every movement she attempted to make. She burst, scrambled, struggled, and tore her way through all, and succeeded at last in planting herself on an open spot nearly opposite to Zaira.

She was, as usual, in rags, and as the strong light gleamed on her hoary streaming hair, her wild features, and her wilder attire, she seemed fit to act the prompting and exulting fury who stood by Nero when he surveyed from his tower Rome in flames, which his own orders had kindled, and which his own orders (it is said) forbid to be extinguished. She began her usual wild dance, regardless of the crowd, and of the terrible cause of their assembling, and min-

gled, from time to time, exclamations in a voice between recitative and singing, that seemed modulated to the music of invisible and infernal spirits. It was very singular of this woman, that though her accent was perfectly Irish, her expressions were not so ; her individual feeling seemed to swallow up and overwhelm her nationality. Wherever she was, she seemed perfectly alone—alone alike amid the mountains of Wicklow or the multitudes of Dublin ; all times, circumstances, and persons seemed to yield to the single, mysterious, undefinable feeling that always governed and inspired her ; and while it made her an object of supreme terror to all others, made all others objects of supreme contempt to her. After twirling rapidly round for some time, (a motion that would have deprived any one else of all recollection, but which seemed necessary to give it to her) she stopt, and shrieked out—“ Ah, ha, you are flying from the fire, but there is a fire coming that none

of you can fly from,—the fire that burns for ever, and ever and ever! Where will you turn when *that* seizes you?—How will you look when that scorches you?—This fire burns red and hot, but it will be hotter when your eyes are melting in their sockets; and your bodies will be like red-hot iron, hard, and burning, and never to be cooled, and never to dissolve, like *my brain, my brain!*—She screamed in sudden agony, clasping her hands on her withered and seamed forehead, and sinking on the ground in a paroxysm of desperate insanity; and while sitting on the stones, she rocked and muttered to herself—“Ay, ay, save your children if you can; but you can never save them from *that fire*. *I could not save mine*. There is not a bit of your gold, or your goods, or all you have risked your lives to save this night, that will not be repaid you a hundred-fold in drops of fire, on your bare scorching skulls below. Poor wretches! your worldly goods are all you

think of. See," she cried, starting up,—
"see how the churches are all lighted up;
see them, they look as if they were burning
at the day of judgment; and you do
not see those who are in the dark church-
yard; and you do not hear them who are
calling from their graves to you,—if they
were alive again, is it this fire they would
be flying from? Is it this trash," (pointing
to the heaps of furniture, &c. that had been
brought out into the street)—"Is it this
trash *they* would be thinking of saving?—
Oh! no, no, ye fools and madmen, and
blind! they would call to you to save your
souls, though the world was burning. Lis-
ten to them, they are speaking to me.—
Well, well, God help us! we are all sin-
ners—all sinners," she cried, bending her
ear to the ground as if she were listening
to voices that issued from it,—"*Ay*, we
are all sinners, either guilty here, or pu-
nished there—no difference between us but
this," (and she stamped on the ground em-

phatically.) "Rest, rest, poor wretches! Trouble me no more; or if you speak, tell me when I am to be at rest with you!"

She seemed now sinking into a kind of sullen torpor, when the sudden clattering of an engine, and the fearful hissing of the flames as the water played on them, appeared to rouse her. As the water failed, the flames burst upward with terrible strength, sending their long flashing volumes across the darkened air; the stars twinkled dimly far above, and gave one the idea that it was a kind of lower infernal heaven that was alternately blackening and reddening so far below their pure fires and temperate aspect. The beldame started up; the horror that struck her appeared to be involuntary; she screamed out—"It was the day of judgment!" and rushing forward, and flinging herself on the ground before Zaira and De Courcy, she cried out,—“And these are angels, two angels come to judgment—see, they are

fire, I touch them and they burn me—*Ora-te pro nobis !*”—(and she caught hold of Zaira's dress.)

“ Oh, protect me from this woman !—she terrifies me. I remember her,” said Zaira, shrinking back and clinging to De Courcy. De Courcy interposed, and attempted to extricate her from the grasp of the maniac, as he believed her.

“ Have you no touch of nature in ye ?” said the woman, suddenly and fearfully altering her tone, and clinging close and closer to Zaira. “ Do you know who (*whom*) it is you drive away ?—Have ye no touch of nature in ye ?—Oh, these hands are withered, but how often they have clasped you round that white neck !—Oh, these hairs are grey, but how often have you played with them when they were as black and as bright as your own !—Sorrow for you has turned them white. Oh, look upon me,—look upon me on my knees. I don't know *your name now*, but you should

never have forgot mine. Oh, have ye no nature in you, and I kneeling on the cold stones *before my own !*"

De Courcy now with difficulty succeeded in tearing Zaira from her, but when he had done so, he found Zaira had fainted. He assisted in conveying her home; she was silent; she appeared shocked and overcome, more than the casual ravings of a maniac could overcome a woman of her self-possession; there seemed to be an ulterior cause for it. This sense of mystery was now becoming a source of provocation to De Courcy; he felt that the sentiments with which she had inspired him, gave him a kind of prescriptive right to her confidence. Love may not always be repaid by love, but it always requires to be repaid by sincerity; and when we surrender our hearts without reserve, we certainly demand an unqualified avowal of the secrets of the heart to which ours are devoted.

Perhaps this latent irritability of De

Courcy's feelings was not diminished by the *public character* of Zaira ; a woman so admired, so conspicuous, might, must have had admirers ; and perhaps this woman, wretched as she was, remote as she appeared from the possibility of the most distant connexion with Zaira, might have in her power something that would elucidate the mystery that obviously hung over Zaira's character and circumstances ; young, beautiful, unprotected, disengaged, a foreigner, and yet claimed (as it seemed) by a begging maniac in the streets of Dublin.—“ Have ye no touch of nature ?” rung in his ears still, as his feverish burning head sunk on the pillow. As slumber stole on him, the voice seemed to speak to him in another tone. ‘The voice appeared to continue after he slept, and he dreamed of Eva. A vision hovered before him in his sleep all night. A dim discoloured figure, something like Eva, but tinged with that melancholy light and indefinite darkness,

with which objects appear to the sick or the unhappy in their troubled dreams. He imagined himself still amidst that dreadful fire, and one figure (*not Zaira's*) was still stretching out its helpless hands to him at a distance, which, when he approached, began to stretch out immeasurably. He struggled in sleep, but vainly, to follow; then he thought he saw Zaira on the top of the burning buildings grasping Eva in her arms. The maniac was there too, and still the cry sounded in his ears—"Have ye no touch of nature in ye?"

CHAPTER III.

Shall I live
To wrong that tender-hearted virgin so?

* * * * *

I see you go, as sily as you think,
To steal away, yet I will pray for you.

BEAUMONT AND FLETCHER.

THE exertions which De Courcy had made at the fire, in assisting the sufferers to remove their furniture, had exhausted him completely. His constitution, naturally feeble, and much impaired by his rapid growth and premature sensibility, was now giving proofs of an early decline. He had excited himself to an unusual degree the preceding night; prompted first by his humanity, and afterwards (unconsciously,

perhaps, but not unnaturally) by the loud praises bestowed by the bystanders on his strength and stature ; for the lower orders of the Irish, like all uncivilized people, are warm admirers of physical superiority ; and, finally, he was impelled and supported in efforts far beyond his strength by the presence of Zaira. “ Ah si ma dame me voyoit,” never was felt or uttered by chivalric knight with more devotion than by De Courcy that night.

The result was, that he was confined to his bed for several days ; during that time Zaira’s messages of enquiry were at his door every hour ; and Wentworth’s grave servant, as grave as his master, called just once every day to know how Mr De Courcy did.

This period, however, was very favourable to Eva. Her image was more associated with the feelings of a sick-bed, and a *dying man*, (for most young people, when

they are ill, think they are dying), than that of the brilliant Zaira.

Their figures were perpetually hovering before his feverish sight ; and Zaira, beautiful, elated, sparkling, seemed a vision that dazzled and tortured him. He closed his burning eyes to shut out her form, and he tossed from side to side of his feverish bed to keep her image away ; and still the theatre blazing with lights ; the boudoir resounding with voices ; the glare, the eclat of her appearance, always bright, prominent, conspicuous ; the “ troops of friends ;” the splendour of her apartments ; the bravos that followed her songs ; the murmur of delight that drowned every sentence she uttered, pursued him even in his dreams. Sometimes he thought himself on the stage acting with her ; sometimes he thought himself in Hell, and that these ministers of pleasure were suddenly become ministers of torment ; and that the faces, which a

moment were smiling with pleasure, and brightening in applause, were suddenly transformed into visages glaring with malignity, distorted with derision, or scowling with vengeance. "Then came by a shadow like an angel." Eva appeared to him; and her image seemed like the coolness of the nights in Upper Egypt, where the heat of the day would be insupportable to the traveller, were it not followed by a refreshing dew.

He stretched out his arms in his feverish sleep, and blessed her. No excitements, no agitating, disturbing, dazzling images, came along with her's. She appeared to him in his delirium employed as she was in life, without parade or publicity. He saw orphans surrounding and blessing her. Her figure, which, contrasted with Zaira's, appeared like the snow-drop compared with the rose, *now* refreshed him by the contrast. The hymns, which he well remembered her to have sung, no longer grated on his ears

with the nasal dissonance, the twang of a conventicle. He heard, he hung on, he attempted to join in them. His quiet evening walk with her and Mrs Wentworth to Bethesda Chapel, which he had loathed so lately, seemed now like a path to Paradise. He cried out repeatedly, "*Let me go with them* ; they are going to Heaven !" Then suddenly he imagined that Zaira's splendid equipage, hurrying to the theatre, crossed him ; that he was dragged along, bound to its wheels. He called out to be released ; he struggled, and exclaimed, " that he was kept down, chained to earth, while Eva and her friends were leaving him behind, leaving him for ever !" Then a wild mixture of play-houses and meeting-houses ; of Zaira's wearing a clergyman's gown, and preaching Eva's funeral sermon in a chapel, where Mrs Wentworth sat weeping, and the *maniac* dancing and howling in the aisle ; and of Eva's rushing on the stage of a crowded theatre, and his vainly dragging

her back, and only grasping a shroud, which she flung off, and threw at him ; and then a thousand other images, equally wild, but singularly connected, wandered through his dreams, and he started and awoke.

Montgomery, the faithful Montgomery, watched by him ; never quitted him ; heard every word of his significant ravings ; marked them, and never, even to De Courcy himself, repeated a syllable of them. He was rejoiced (*silently* rejoiced), however, to find that the first day De Courcy was able to quit his room, he proposed to visit at Mr Wentworth's.

" *They* have been very attentive," said De Courcy ; " *they* have sent every day to enquire about me."

" *They?*" said Montgomery to himself—
" And is that all ?"

As they went down stairs, one of Zaira's servants in a splendid livery was waiting with enquiries from his mistress. Montgomery silently cursed him by all his gods.

and stood on the stairs "gnawing his bitter nail;" while De Courcy, at the sight of the well-known livery, rushed forward, and, without listening to the enquiries the man was directed to make, began overpowering him with questions about Zaira.

Montgomery, with a desperate effort *for him*, sprung after him, and caught him by the arm as he was speaking.

Montgomery was not a man for nice conjunctures; not a man to watch the ebbs and flows of feelings, to sail with the tide, and tack with the change of the breeze. Montgomery, with the best possible intentions, was always doing the worst possible things, and this abrupt and forcible interference seemed to De Courcy like a presumption on his enfeebled health, and sent him in a kind of reluctant, humiliated state to Mr Wentworth's.

There, all appeared exactly as he had left it. One could swear to the position of every chair in the room, if they had not

visited the house for a month. Life or death seemed to make no change in this family ; yet De Courcy, prepossessed, alienated, abstracted, as he was, could not but be struck, be gratified, amazed to rapture, with the eager but silent delight with which Eva at his appearance started from her seat, flung down her work, and half-extended her hand in speechless fondness towards him.

Before he could touch it, she had recollected herself, resumed her seat, resumed her work, and, but for her blushes, no one could have imagined that she felt, and condemned herself for daring to feel. But after this first effort, so soon recalled and suppressed, Eva had no power of sustaining a protracted tone of feeling in those whom she inspired with it ; she could not diversify passion by the resources of imagination, nor make one sentiment assume a thousand disguises and charm in all. Her feelings always gave love the trouble of a

search to find them, and then did not always reward them for the toil ; and in the silent timid girl, intent on her work, and only betraying her emotion by her trembling hands and broken respiration, one must have had a kind of intuition to discover the deep and hidden workings of a heart whose resources were yet unknown even to its possessor. There were, indeed, flowers under the snow, but one was chilled in the effort to bring them to light ; and De Courcy's age was that which required developement, instead of being capable of bestowing it.

De Courcy bent over her for some time ; the glow of meeting had faded away, and Eva had not one ray of intellect to rekindle its lustre. De Courcy *forced* himself to think, over and over again, of the transient flush,—the evanescent brilliancy of her look,—of her motions (when he appeared) to make himself believe that she loved him, and perhaps to remind himself that he still

loved her. "This was the very spot on which you sat the last time I saw you," said he at length; "you were employed at the same work; I believe it was the very same chair you sat on; at least I am sure it was just in this corner of the window it was placed. Nothing changes its place here—you never feel a wish for a change."

"My life is monotonous, very monotonous," said Eva, plying her work with increasing, unskilful, agitated industry;—"very little interesting to any one but myself."

De Courcy's heart swelled at these words; this avowedly "monotonous" life,—this La Trappe existence, without the enthusiasm, the devotedness, the refined selfishness that makes us delight in self-inflictions when we hope to purchase a remission of future punishment by anticipating it here; this Al-Araf,* without a glimpse of heaven; this

* Vide Southey, from D'Herbelot.

voluntary suffering without cause, merit, or excitement (for he knew Eva's creed disdained the thought of *merit*)—all rushed on his feelings and overpowered him; yet the emotion that seemed to deny him words (by a mental paradox not uncommon) inspired him with eloquence, and he painted in dangerous colours, and with unintentional seductiveness, the charms of the world she was resigning without a knowledge of it.

He ceased, and Eva was silent, not because she was unable to answer him, but because her habitual diffidence, and perhaps the very depth of her feelings, rendered her incapable of expressing them. Straws float on the stream, but pearls are found in the gulph, and they require the art and patience of the diver to bring them to the light. After Eva had tried vainly to reduce her "simple thoughts" into the form of argument, she gave up the attempt, and resting her strength on the force of an ap-

peal, she turned her eyes with unconscious, but resistless expression, on De Courcy. "Why," said she, in a voice that seemed to falter at its own sound—"why do you wish to agitate me with the love of the world?—There is no further room in my heart but for the love of God and of you!"

De Courcy was silent; the language of her innocent heart seemed like prayer, and he dreaded to interrupt its aspirations. Some other recollections crossed him at that moment; De Courcy, like most young men, had never been accustomed to pray; with him it had been a paroxysm, not a habit; he remembered having prayed, during his frequent illness, in short, feverish ejaculations; he had prayed too, prayed from the bottom of his heart, the night after he had parted from Zaira at Bray, and called on God to sanctify their friendship, and reconcile it with his union with Eva. At this moment, he felt such egoistical dramatic de-

votion was a mockery ; Eva's habitual language seemed to be prayer, and her countenance, like the breast-plate of the Jewish high-priest, reflected the will of the Deity at a look. They were both silent, and for a long time ; then Eva, who had been for weeks preparing for this effort, and to whom, when it approached, it seemed like the approach of death, determined on speaking about Zaira. The moment was come—her hands were convulsed ;—she laid down the work, which she no longer saw—she cleared her throat repeatedly, but felt, when she attempted to speak, as if her voice was gone for ever. At length, with an effort that astonished her as much as if she then exercised the faculty of speaking for the first time, she said,—“ Do you often see Madame Dalmatiani ? ”

“ Yes, very often,” said De Courcy, surprised into an answer, and equally surprised at the question.

"She is very beautiful," said Eva, who, like all who have once begun, felt it easy to proceed.

"Oh, exquisitely beautiful!" said De Courcy, in a tone he could not repress.

"And very clever—talented, accomplished I mean," said Eva, hardly knowing a term for intellectual eminence in women.

"Oh, yes!" said Charles, eagerly, equally at a loss for a term that could express his overpowering sense of Zaira's perfections, but supplying all defects of language by the tone in which his assent was uttered.

"How happy you must be in her society," said Eva, amazed at herself, and continuing to speak almost unconsciously, and, as it appeared to her, almost in delirium.

"Yes," said Charles, sighing involuntarily; "all her friends are happy in her society."

Eva became suddenly dumb; the spirit that had supported her failed at once; Charles's unqualified answer in the affirma-

tive had left her without excuse for prolonging the subject, and she had no power, and no wish if she had the power, to manage conversation so as to lead it to the point her heart was full of. She had intended, perhaps, that something like an explanation should take place, but she was wholly incapable of conducting, or, what is more difficult, of commencing an explanation; and she finished as she began, in timid, embarrassed silence, regretting she had spoken, dreading to pause, but dreading still more to proceed. On such occasions, the most uninteresting objects are often the most welcome; in a crisis of feeling, any object who does not partake in it, becomes a relief; and both Eva and De Courcy, for the first time in their lives, rejoiced to see Mr Wentworth enter with some evangelical friends.

Macowen immediately sat down by Eva. There was something about this man always peculiarly repulsive to De Courcy.

This night, presuming perhaps on the increasing report of (what the evangelical people called) De Courcy's awful fall, he was more offensive than ever. His gloating eyes, frightfully distorted between their habitual up-turned fixture, and their leering obliquity of amorous squint,—his greasy perspiring hands, rubbed with uncouth restless awkwardness on the thread-bare polished knees, of his black breeches,—his stubborn red hair, every capillary tube of which seemed alive in the present cause,—instinct with horrid significant existence,—his usual nasal, sonorous drawl, softened most reluctantly into an amorous whine,—his long muscular neck, *craning* out from his stiff, single, ill-coloured cravat, extended instinctively, and instinctively reddening to his jaws at the mention of a religious topic, and then declining with loathsome submission towards Eva, and extending its *spires* over her like a serpent over its prey,—his *tout-ensemble* might have served Mo-

here for his Tartuffe, and all his translators and followers, from Cibber down to Murphy, for their Dr Wolf's and Dr Cantwell's, and was more disgusting than them all.

Eva drew back her chair quietly, till it was close to her aunt's. De Courcy indignantly rose from his, and, pushing back the well-filled plate of buttered cake, (which Mr Macowen drew gently towards himself) retired.

As he went out, he observed something like an unusual bustle in the hall. Mr Wentworth had been called out of the parour some time before ; he was now standing near the door talking to a man, whose figure, dimly seen as it was by the light in the hall, De Courcy observed, announced extreme wretchedness ; and the contrast between his and Mr Wentworth's figure, who stood close beside him, was curious. Wentworth was erect, stiff, motionless ; he stood, indeed, but not with the slightest

appearance of attention to, or even consciousness of, the figure before him. He listened, (if it could be called listening), for neither eye, mouth, or muscle of the face showed the slightest symptom of relaxation, no more than a clock shows, when a person is stationed before it anxiously watching the progress of its hands.

The man was standing before him, but his attitude could hardly be called standing; misery appeared to have given his form an habitual, unalterable bend; misery, arising from pecuniary causes, is very degrading. He stood a living personification of Burns's strong description—

“ To beg his brother of the dust
To give him leave to toil.”

Wentworth, after listening to what seemed a long account, answered, with perfect immobility of attitude and aspect, and with a voice such as might be supposed to issue

from the lips of an automaton, (if an automaton could speak), "Friend, you want me to renew your bill ; it cannot be done."

The wretched man looked as if he was preparing to begin over again his effort of explanation, remonstrance, and entreaty. Mr Wentworth appeared also prepared to listen, as Shylock listens to the pleadings of Antonio. But the suppliant's voice failed him ; the clamminess of despair was on his lips ; his broken respiration ; his frequent, hopeless hems ; his quivering fingers, raised to his mouth as if to remove some impediment, which he felt no effort of his could remove—all gave signal that he pleaded, even to his own conviction, in vain.

De Courcy kept busily searching for his hat in the back-ground ; but he caught the words—" the late fire—hard times—every other creditor renewing his bills—a *little time*—*Mr Wentworth might be sure*—He was the only bill-holder that held out against him—it would be his ruin—his ruin," and

the poor wretch dwelt with intense agonizing emphasis on the last word, and repeated it three or four times almost convulsively.

It seemed to have a much stronger effect on him than on Mr Wentworth. *He* listened unmoved, and then said, not speaking till the man had said and looked his utmost—"Friend, I always make it a rule to renew a bill once (at a short date) that is right and fair; but never a second time—never. We ought to *owe no man any thing, but to love one another.*"

The poor man became dumb when he heard Scripture quoted against him. He tried to put on his hat; he tried to make a parting bow with habitual respect and miserable humility. Both efforts failed. He did not know his way to the door. Mr Wentworth stalked before him, like the statue in Don John, and opened the door with his own hands. The man hesitated on the steps, turned, felt that his turning

was of no use ; and plunged into the street, as if he was plunging into his grave.

De Courcy followed him instantly. De Courcy was the heir of a large property ; but his guardians had been strict in the execution of their duty, and allowed him no more money than was necessary for his personal expenses. Those had been greatly increased since his acquaintance with Zaira, and he was now very poor ; all the money he had he thrust into the man's hand, as they quitted the house together ; and the man, with that strong expression of feeling peculiar to the Irish, which sometimes revolts, and sometimes conciliates, fell on his knees in the street to thank him.

De Courey, shocked to the soul at this humiliation, raised him, and inwardly resolved to call on his guardians for some money, to assist this unfortunate man ; and he felt his wish to assist him, and his indignation against all sordid feelings, con-

siderably heightened by Mr Wentworth having been the cause of their excitement, "A Christian—an evangelical professor," said De Courcy to himself; "scandalous—such people ought to be exposed to the world;" and he strengthened himself in his virtuous indignation.

John Bunyan, in his *Pilgrim's Progress*, says, that, when people begin to fall off in religion, they always graduate through the following stages:—

"1st, They cast off by degrees private duties and prayer.

"2^{dly}, They shun the company of warm and lively Christians,

"3^{dly}, They grow cold to public duty; as hearing, reading, godly conference, and the like.

"4^{thly}, They begin to pick holes in the coats of the saints," &c. &c.

De Courcy had certainly arrived at this fourth stage. He was beginning to be extreme, to mark what was done amiss

among the evangelical people; and he indulged himself in the bad habit of transferring the censure due to individuals only, to the whole society. Mr Wentworth and Macowen (bad specimens enough), he disingenuously set up in his own mind as the representatives of the whole party; and then, with bad logic and worse feeling, made the evangelical system answerable with its life for the delinquency of these capital offenders. Sometimes he pursued this train of reasoning till it led him to Eva herself, and he recoiled at his own injustice, yet felt that it was the secret purpose of his heart to include her.

Resolved to expose Mr Wentworth, he thought proper to relate the circumstance to Zaira, and was not a little surprised at the apparent want of emotion with which she listened to him. She appeared unusually absent and abstracted; and, in a short time, sat down to finish some letters she had been writing. De Courcy took up a

book, and threw himself on a sofa at the other end of the room. Zaira was writing to her continental friends, and particularly to Madame St Maur. Part of her letter contained these words :—

* * * * *

“ You cannot comprehend what I have felt, since I learned the object of his attachment is an evangelical female. You do not exactly understand this phrase, my dear Delphine. You can explain it to yourself by the puritans of Cromwell’s time, with whose history you are well acquainted. Imagine a woman of this class, and then imagine De Courcy united to her. I would sooner be reconciled to any destiny that might befall him, than to his becoming the victim of this frightful religion. All the hopes, the visions in which I had indulged my imagination and my heart, are blasted for ever.

“ I resigned, without a murmur, the hope of partaking his happiness ; but I still cherished that of witnessing it ; of seeing him attain that brilliant distinction in society for which he was formed. I limited myself to the coldest pretensions of the coldest friendship—to a feeling that might have been cherished for him by one of his own sex. His brother might be allowed to exult in his success in life ; yet this hope, humble as it was, is sacrificed and lost. He is to be married to an evangelical female ! His talents ; his taste ; his intellectual ambition ; his seductive graces of form and manner, are to be buried, overwhelmed for ever, in the hopeless, rayless darkness of fanaticism !

“ Mezentius, who united a dead body to a living one, was guilty of a less crime, and less cruelty, than he who unites De Courcy to this girl. There is no describing, Delphine, my horror of this species of religion, “ which merits heaven, by

making earth an hell!" Let them speak for themselves, and let them speak out; into what would they convert life if they could?—into a mass, formless and void; as devoid of motion—of beauty and of variety, as chaos, before the influence of the Spirit, or the creation of light! Existence with them is only measured, and viewed in a reference to futurity, or, as they call it, to eternity; and their deity is a being, who, to raise the value of his heaven, deprives them of every enjoyment below, that might cause them to linger in their progress, or cast one longing look behind.

"It is certainly policy, in this view, to rend away every flower that springs up in the path of life, and bid us hope that their wreaths are all transplanted to a future state. If we estimated the enjoyments of life on the most philosophical scale, we might be allowed to reckon among them health, competence, society, and the enjoy-

ments of literature and the arts. But in this view all these objects are neutralized. We are to travel from Dan to Beersheba, and cry all is barren, or rather we are to raise fruits not indigenous to the soil. With them, health and sickness, poverty and affluence; all the enjoyments, and all the privations of life, are to be viewed exactly *in the same plane*, as merely various manifestations of the will of the Deity concerning our temporal destination, and to be regarded as little as one who was obtaining admission to a palace would regard the structure of the passages through which he was led, provided they ultimately conducted him to the presence of the sovereign.

“This is stoicism in its hardest, least digestible shape; for it is stoicism, without the pride that makes indifference to life supportable. The great vicissitudes of life are usually submitted to the con-

troul of religion ; and whether indifference or resignation be administered as the palliative of its evils, we are satisfied ; we willingly relinquish the cure of complaints, of which we know not the nature or extent, to any remedy that may be proposed for their relief. None of us can prolong human existence beyond its appointed period, or diminish its physical evils in any great degree, any more than we can account for the vast preponderance of both physical and moral evil in life. We, therefore, readily submit, in the great questions relating to them, to those who are appointed, or those who undertake to direct or console us in the investigation of them.

“ Those who feel they have a burthen they cannot shake off, will readily submit to any guide who promises an alleviation of its pressure, either by affecting to render us insensible of its weight, or

by pretending they can shorten the path through which we must support it.

“ But life—life itself, we cannot resign so easily. We suffer Divines to dictate to us about futurity, but we choose to dictate to ourselves in life. What a life would those people have us lead? Their society is compressed into their own *cast*; they have no other standard for excellence, moral or intellectual, but conformity to their creed !

“ All the virtues, talents, and graces, on earth, if it were possible to combine them in one form, (as I have seen them combined,) would appear to them only as a brilliant victim, arrayed for sacrifice on the altar of Satan !—When they mix in society, they mix only with the view of hearing their sentiments echoed by those who join in them, or opposed by those who differ from them. Their only alternative is monotonous assent, or clamorous hostility. They have but two notes in their scale,

one of them is *unison*, the other *discord*—no harmony!

“As to literature, it is unfair to speak of them with reference to it: Since the Restoration, the Puritanic party have become literary in their own defence. They have borrowed jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, of the Egyptians, and spoiled them, and, like the children of Israel, they have quite forgotten the obligation. It would be almost an awful question to ask, (it would be certainly a question of deep national interest,) What would have been the result, had these people the issues of intellectual life and death in their hands? Is there one of them that would have escaped? History would appear to them a record of the crimes of *unenlightened men*—Poetry, that language of the gods, as the wantonness of a depraved imagination—Science, as the presumptuous effort of overweening pride. All knowledge, all intellectual

cultivation, they would have reckoned as worse than nothing, and vanity. Like the Arabian Chief, when he was going to burn the library of Alexandria, they would have employed the short dilemma. "The Koran contains all necessary knowledge: If these books contain more than the Koran, they ought to be burned; if they contain less, they may;" and so the most precious relics of antiquity fed the baths of Alexandria for three months.

"Oh, my dear Delphine! Think of a dynasty of beings, whose whole system would reverse all that the intellectual power, (the power of thinking freely, of judging rightly, and of assimilating man to the Deity, in the only point which mortality without presumption may seize, that of mental enlargement,) has been slowly doing for ages. What would these people make of the world? Their history would be the experience of converts and preachers; in other words,

the vacillation of the human mind between infidelity and madness. Their poetry would be the obituary tears of an Evangelical Magazine; and their science—they would—they could have no science, beyond the use of the plumb-line that enabled them to measure the walls of their gloomy conventicles, or the clock that summoned them to their devotions; and, “told legible their midnight of despair.” As for the arts—those persons may look on them as lawful means for extorting subsistence from the ungodly; but how would the arts fare, if the world consisted of persons like them? Would not Guido’s Aurora, and Raphael’s Cartoons, and Rembrandt’s Descent from the Cross, be all mortgaged this moment, for the vile wooden-cut of an evangelical preacher, with his lank hair and Iscariot visage, as if he were just come from selling his Lord, not preaching him? Would not sculpture, if she pleaded for her life with Laocoon in one hand, and Niobe in the

other, be rejected for some spruce monument over the reliques of Dr Coke, or Dr Huntington? Literature; science; the arts;—all that agitates or embellishes life,—all that makes human existence superior to that of the beasts that perish, would be lost, confounded, trampled on. The world—the world, is called on to oppose those men, to show the desolating danger of their principles, to—and De Courcy is to be united to an evangelical female! Then he is lost to me for ever! The malignity inspired by opposite creeds has been found to exceed in its effects all that hatred ever yet infused into the heart of man.

“ZAIRA.”

* * * * *

Madame St Maur's answer contained that mixture of frivolity, worldliness, clear sense,

and strong affection, which really formed her character. There was the usual and due proportion of philosophical sentiments, and artificial flowers, and political terrors, and terrors about a sick lap-dog ; but on one subject she appeared to be quite decided.

In the end of her letter, she says, " It is impossible that you can longer deceive yourself. You never deceived me. You love this man ; love him, in spite of every thing hostile,—his country, his habits, his engagements, his being actually on the eve of marriage ;—in spite of yourself, and your heroic resolutions about friendship ; resolutions which I have always observed to terminate exactly as yours have done ; for it happens that we never dream of *commencing* friends, till we have actually taken our degrees as lovers in the last stage. Then your tirade against that poor girl and her religion, which no doubt is bad enough ; but, for Heaven's sake, can't you suffer her

to go to the devil her own way! Can any power on earth persuade me, that you would sit down to study divinity, for the sake of abusing a set of people, whom you would care no more about than the Camisards of France; only that you choose to be in love with a boy whom one of these pretty puritans has captivated?

“ Ah, my dear! all your apprehensions about the fatal results these people with their strange opinions would produce in society, have an origin far remote from your zeal for literature. It was yourself, and not the world, you felt for, or I would try to console you, by reminding you that these people, with all the good they mean to do, and all the harm they really have done, never can subvert the frame of society, or materially alter the tendencies of nature.

“ Fear not, my charming Zaire! there will always be enough to *love the world*. It has a fine share of popularity in most hearts; and to the end of our time at least,

there will be theatres, and balls, and concerts, and eclat, and homages, and *succes*, and pretty women, and men to admire them, if all the begging Bonzes of the East were united with all the mendicant orders of Europe, and they again backed by the ghosts of the Rump-parliament, raised from the dead for the purpose. Do you remember your admirable Shakspeare? "Thinkest thou, because thou art virtuous, there shall be no more cakes and ale? Yea, by Saint Anne, and ginger shall be hot in the mouth too!"

"The farce of fanatic religion is just like all other farces, only that it is a little duller for the spectators. There was our Madame de —, with her *gift of infrigidation*, and Fenelon, with his quietism, and the wonder-working Abbé, whose bones caused so much trouble in Paris that Louis the XV. was obliged to lay his commands on the Deity to work no more miracles at his

tomb;* and all these people just served to make one laugh, when one was tired of Carlini.

“ And now, my dear Zaire, that I have removed your apprehensions about the world being turned upside down by these moral Archimedes's, have the goodness to remove mine (if you can) about yourself.

“ All my levity forsakes me when I think of your situation; when I think you are on the point of sacrificing your talents, your distinction, your long-acquired and high-sustained fame, for an attachment to a stranger, a boy, an acquaintance of yesterday, the native of a country that scarce has a place in history. Impose no longer on yourself; what you feel for him bears no resemblance to friendship. And an Irishman! is it possible that his talents can have

* De par le Roy, defense à Dieu
De faire miracle en ce lieu.

received so much cultivation ; his manners so much refinement ; his mind so much maturity, as to compensate the most intellectual woman in Europe, for the sacrifice she is about to make for him ?

“ Do not misunderstand me, Zaire. By sacrifice, I mean nothing but marriage ; but your marriage will be the greatest of all sacrifices. Let him marry his pretty devotee, if he will, and convert her, if he can, or be converted by her ; and do you soar aloft into those regions you were formed for, and leave those tame fowl to bill and brood till they are tired of it, which they probably will be in a quarter of a year. If I was speaking of a French pair, I should say, in a quarter of an hour.

“ Waken, waken, my charming Zaire, from your dream ! it is but a dream ; or sleep on and perish, as the botanists did in their tour of exploration on the coasts of New Holland.

“ DELPHINE ST MAUR.”



It was not till after many days that Zaira's answer to this letter was written : Part of it shewed the state of her mind.

“ You have discovered to me the state of my own heart—a woman can never escape the penetration of a woman. I love him then—a thousand circumstances contributed to conceal from me, not only the state of my heart, but the knowledge of it. My early years were past in the slavery of unremitting application, or the excitement of premature ambition.

“ That *I could* have loved, was certain ; but my fatal, miserable marriage ! The degradation, the physical sufferings, and the necessity of constant public exertion, and laborious preparation for that exertion which followed, kept me in a state of insensibility to any thing but the success of the night, and the hope of obtaining a re-

mission of my toils from the heartless wretch who watched the applauses bestowed on me as indications of his profit, and sunk or raised the scale of his indulgence in the same proportion. I was too miserable to think of love, even had my feelings inclined to levity, which they never did. My sufferings, or my constitution, served me in the place of those lessons of virtue which I had never received, but which I never transgressed. Perhaps the contrast between my forced, brilliant appearance on the stage, where I was compelled for ever to sing and declaim about love ; and the total absence of that feeling from my heart and my experience, impressed me with a degree of incredulity about the feeling itself. One image alone remained at the bottom of my heart—the image of my child. After a day of laborious application, and a night of theatrical exhibition, how have I retired to weep over that image, as if it was the corse of my child

I wept over, and pressed to my cold heart!

“That hope has ceased—all hope of natural objects filling up my existence has ceased for ever!—What wonder, then, in this isolation of feeling, this orphanship of the heart, I should adopt any object that promised to fill its desolate vacuity! Ignorant as I was of the very nature of love, what wonder that I recognised the feeling that invaded me under any other name!

* * * *

I am all candour with you, my dear Delphine! My ignorance of love was certainly wilful. From the time I attained my present distinction, I was surrounded, oppressed by admirers. But none of them loved me; there was not one of them I could have loved. They were all selfish, sensual, ignorant, or depraved! They courted my notoriety, not me;—they coveted the distinction my talents could have bestowed on them;—they sought not to con-

fer that distinction on me, which every woman expects from the virtues or the genius of the man whom she prefers.

“ You can bear witness, my dear Delphine, to the indifference with which I listened to those men, and the ease with which I dismissed them.—Living in the world as I did, what could I know of love ! Life may instruct us in its artificial modifications, but never did it teach us the knowledge of the most elementary feelings ; or assist us to develop those recesses of the heart, which it is its daily lesson to conceal. Life may teach us the knowledge of others, but never can instruct us in the knowledge of ourselves.

* * * * *

“ Thus ignorant, profoundly ignorant, of the mysteries of the heart, while all imagined I was mistress of its operations, because I could represent their external expressions, and because my physical powers

were supposed to harmonize with that expression, I mingled in life, and learned the danger of inexperience, when it was too late to profit by the lesson.

“ I was attracted by a form, of which it is in vain to banish from my feelings the power or the charm ; and I believed I could gaze on it, as I have gazed on a statue. I have lived only in the presence of that being ; and I called the feeling with which his presence inspired me—friendship ! I have mingled in society, and recalled his image, to enable me to support it : I have retired to solitude, and retraced his image, to make solitude delightful : I have hung on the words he uttered : I have recounted the most trifling change of his motions : I have made a diary of the heart, of every look, and word, and thought, (for I have seen his thoughts :) I have fed on the light of his eye : I have lived on the air he breathed, and lived only on that air ; and still I called this—friendship !

“ Your worldly wisdom, my dear Delphine! and my increasing terror of the feelings, which, new to me, derived increasing terror from their novelty, have undeceived me. It is not friendship—it cannot be love. Whatever it be, I renounce it. I may be unhappy, but never will be ungenerous. He is engaged, devoted, sacrificed—be it so—I resign him for ever—On this paper, blotted, bathed with my tears, I renounce him for ever!—His beautiful wife shall not have to reproach me with a sigh—she deserves him, no doubt—Why did I feel such agitation when I heard of this marriage?—what was his marriage to me?—Why did I feel that agitation redoubled, when I heard he was to marry an evangelical female?—what was her religion to me?—Oh! how my heart reproaches, and yet consoles me!

* * * * *

“ I have mentally compared my character with hers. Must I not be sufficiently humbled, when I make this comparison? Alas! Intellectual women do not always make the impression they wish on men. They do too much or too little; which has been my crime, I know not; nor is it of any consequence *now*. I forgot that this letter was written to contain my renunciation of him for ever.”

In her answer, Madame St Maur confirmed Zaira in her resolution of abandoning Ireland and De Courcy for ever; but her exhortations were almost illegible, from the terrors under which they were written. The allies were *at Paris, in Paris*, before her letter was finished; and poor Madame St Maur, instead of seeing Marshal Blucher at her feet, seems to have been apprehensive that those pretty feet would soon have to bear her to a prison. She had been a zealous Buonapartiste from fashion, en-

thusiasm, from any thing but steady principle. After giving her advice, her terrors break out.

* * * *

“ *Mon dieu !*—The allies are absolutely within a few leagues of Paris. The Emperor’s beating a few stragglers at St Diziers, is mere *fanforanade*. I begin not to like this Buonaparte. How could he expose the Parisians to the horrors of an assault. Shocking inconsideration ! I am stunned by the terrible, real tumult in the streets. Ah, how long is it since we have had any thing *real* in Paris ! Realities do not suit the sublime mercurialized genius of the Parisians. What horrors surround us ! I know not how *mon joli chat* will escape. They say those Cossacks eat cats ! Horrible, I will rather perish first.

* * * *

“ Ah, my beautiful Zaire, the artillery of the allies is sending its thunders from the heights of Montmartre. What an event! How astonishing! What a disgrace to the history of civilised nations! Paris, the metropolis of the world, invested by hostile forces! Paris, that like Sparta, never saw the smoke of an enemy's camp! After this, the sacking of Rome by pagan Goths, or by catholic Imperialists in the time of Clement, may be read with very little emotion. All my feelings are suspended by my concentrated indignation. Paris invested!—but it is impossible it can ever be taken. I will fly and read all the histories extant, to try if such an event ever took place since the times of the League. I have some faint recollections of *the Duchess De Montpensier's bread*. I confess I should not like to eat it. No, on second thoughts, I will fly and get a bunch of lilies, the largest that loyalty can make or imagine, to put

in my hat. Ah, my God! what will become of my cat if the Cossacks eat him? I think I will mix a few Provence roses among the lilies. Roses always became me."

Such was Madame St Maur's agitation, that she forgot to send off her letter for some days; those days made a wonderful alteration in her feelings, or rather her opinions. Delighted with the change that had taken place, just as a child would be for the accompanying spectacle, she forgets that she began her letter a Buonapartiste, and ends an absolute Ultra. She speaks with fluent rapture of *le vieux bon temps*, and *Louis le Desirè*. She takes some slight offence, indeed, at the Duchesse d'Angoulême's *petit chapeau*, but recovers her good humour, and eloquently describes the splendour of a ball at Paris, where she was actually turned by the Emperor of Russia as

he was dancing down with Lady Castle-reagh. This turn seems happily to have completed her conversion.

CHAPTER IV.

Disturbers of th' indignant earth,
That shakes ye from her bosom forth,
And thou, fell author of this day,
Where art thou now, and where are they?

SHEE'S *Waterloo*.

It was all true ; the allies were indeed at Paris. *That* had actually come to pass, which, if any man had predicted two years before, when Buonaparte was setting out to *change the dynasty of Russia*, he would have been regarded as actually mad. In Dublin, where parties run high, the sensation caused by this intelligence was beyond all description, all imagination. The allies themselves landing in the bay of Dublin could not have made a greater bustle. It was no stock-jobbing report ; no bulletin

fabricated in the cabinet of a minister ; it was all stubborn, homely, undeniable fact. The allies were in Paris repaying the friendly visits they had received from Buonaparte at Vienna, Berlin, and Moscow. Nothing ever was like the tumult in Dublin that day, and many a following one.

The statue of King William, in College Green, was placarded from top to bottom, the characters on the papers large enough to be read from St Andrew's Church, or even from the Post-Office. As to the Post-Office, there was no getting near it,—news-hawkers and news-readers seemed to have a lease for ever of its steps. The whole population of Dublin appeared concentrated in College Green. Carriages stopping by dozens before the placards,—horsemen rising on tiptoe in their stirrups above the heads of the crowd, to read them,—and the crowd, wedged head to head, and foot to foot, planted by hundreds and by thousands, gazing, devouring with mouths, eyes, and

ears all that could be heard, seen, or swallowed.

Happy those who could read, and happy even those who could only get others to read to them, the grand talismanic words of —“ Entrance of the Allies into Paris— Overthrow of the Buonaparte Dynasty— Restoration of the Bourbons”—all *exclusive intelligence* that day received. Then the shops where the papers were sold,—they could not have been more beset had the salvation of mankind depended on the working of the press. There were the hawkers flapping the damp reeking papers in every body's eyes, and getting them snatched out of their hands faster than they could disentangle their wet clinging sheets. The government papers, how they triumphed—as well they might. “ Our wise and virtuous administration”—“ our perseverance in a just and necessary war”—“ its glorious termination”—“ the sublime attitude of Great Britain, prescribing and contro-

ling the destinies of all Europe." The opposition papers,—what had they to say now? Nothing,—not a word; as Cobbett himself said,—“The Gazette was their answer.” They muttered something about future fears and evils, and *hoped* all would be well; but who minded their mutterings or their hopes? *The Dublin Evening Post* itself was reduced to silence; the very paper which three days before had placarded the statue with the “Defeat and Distraction of the Allies,”* now was compelled to announce the success of the men they had abused, and the measures they had decried, with that kind of grim extorted acquiescence with which Haman attended the triumph of Mordecai the Jew through the streets of Susa.

Every man who came down from the Castle of Dublin that day, from the smart

* Fact.

aid-de-camp to the lowest clerk in office, looked six inches taller, and trod the pavement of Dame-Street, firm, erect, graceful, and triumphant. The demand for white lilies, and high French bonnets, rose every moment; the lilies were twined in the locks of every belle, and worn in the straw-hats of apprentices.

The general sentiment was certainly that of joy. The appalling, supernatural greatness of Buonaparte had terrified even those who wished him well, and men seemed relieved, as from the spell of an enchanter. His very well-wishers were glad he was checked; *checked only*, as they hoped, not overthrown. The violet blossomed again in their imaginations; they did not foresee its final blast at Waterloo.

It was a pleasant sight to witness the strong expression of loyal rational joy that occurred in every street; men shook hands with each other; congratulations passed as

eagerly, as if every one had gained a lawsuit, or succeeded to a property. Military bands came thundering down the streets, all playing the "Downfall of Paris." There was a kind of national jubilee.

De Courcy had dined in the country that day, and was stunned, deafened by all he heard. His head and heart were full of other objects, aristocratic as he was. He hurried back to Dublin, and was met by the intelligence that Madame Dalmatiani, who had declined so long appearing on the stage, was to appear that night in a *short scena*, and join in an *appropriate* chorus.

Zaira had got from Pucitta a manuscript copy of the chorus he had composed for the occasion, "Esulta Britannia, di Wellington Madre;" and bad as it was, (perhaps the worst he had ever composed, and not at all aided by the poetry), she had been importuned by peers to embellish this national fete by her talents. Her spirits were elated by the idea: to appear thus in the wake of kings

and conquerors, hymning forth their victories, was congenial to her taste, and to her talents; perhaps she wished also to leave an impression on De Courcy of what her talents might effect, when supported by an enthusiasm which she really felt, and in which nations were the sharers. When she consented to appear once more on the stage, she hoped he might be in the house. There was nothing strained or exaggerated in this; she was an inveterate royalist, as far as her political feelings were concerned, and other feelings prompted her to this last effort. It was on the stage he had first beheld her, and she felt a justifiable anxiety to revive this impression, and set in glory on his imagination.

Even when we are determined on final separation, we wish its last moments to reflect the light of our first meeting; and this feeling, inseparable from passion, is perhaps aggravated by the consciousness of genius,

which maintains its prerogative with jealously, even amid the most lavish sacrifices. Zaira could have borne to be the slave of the man she loved ; but she never could have borne, that he should be ignorant how much she was devoted to him.

With a kind of anguished and indignant feeling she rushed on the stage this night, determined to exhibit all her talents and charms in full forcible contrast to the insipid being, and monotonous life he had chosen ; and, resolved to lose him, she was resolved also to show him what he had lost in her. This may be forgiven her ; she believed it the last weakness she would be guilty of.

The house was crowded from pigeon-hole to pit. De Courcy could not get a seat ; a place in which he could see from top to bottom of the theatre. The heat was intolerable ; the applause tremendous. By dint of interest he at length succeeded in screwing himself into a place in the orchestra ; (he

was fortunately known to one of the proprietors). He waited, gasped, panted ; at last Zaira appeared,—appeared in all her glory ; in all her beauty ;—thunders of applause. She moved—a perfect silence, broken only by some slight murmurs from the half-suffocated patients in the pit. She raised her white graceful arm—the sufferers were dumb. Those who had fretted and cursed, stewed and swore, for two intolerable hours, were dumb in a moment ; those who had been raised on others' backs sought to rise no higher, (for the first time that night) ; and those who bore them were contented with their burthen.

She sung—and all forgot what they had suffered. The first bars in that insipid chorus she sung, as a solo, with such spirit—such expression, bordering on inspiration—she appeared so much the embodied genius of the moment ; her arms extended as if they were catching the Heaven-wove wreath

to crown the head of the conqueror ; her features flushed with the loftiest expression that can animate the human countenance ; (the consciousness of becoming *an agent* in great events, by the power of sympathizing with, or attesting them by the force of genius ;) her voice, like the trumpet of victory, its thrilling swell, its rich vibrations, filling every ear and heart.—Such as she was that moment ; her talents excited by dramatic applause, and national enthusiasm, and an indignant consciousness that exalted her pride, while it depressed her hope, and combined the melancholy of sensibility with the energy of genius—who could behold her unmoved ?

All imagined that her extraordinary exertions were *owing to the occasion*. Her appearance was gratuitous, and the emergency, unparalleled in the history of Europe, seemed to have produced a corresponding exertion of her unequalled talents.

But in judging of the conduct of public people, whether on the stage of politics, or of the theatre, how often we look *far and wide* for the motives that influence ! The crowded theatre saw nothing but Zaira ; Zaira, in the crowded theatre, saw nothing but De Courcy.

An old gentleman in the pit whispered to his friend the well-known story of Gabrielli, who never exerted herself on the stage, unless her lover was placed in a conspicuous situation near it ; and he added, that the audience to-night were indebted to the same arrangement, for the *extraordinary* display of Madame Dalmatiani's talents. His friend's head was inclined toward him to catch the intelligence. All heads were quickly bent round in the eagerness of attention. The old gentleman got proud of dividing the attention of the bystanders with Zaira, and he whispered, " I know it all ; I heard it all from good

authority ; look at that tall lad in the orchestra."

They looked, and lo ! they fixed on a bassoon-player.

"Pho !" said the old gentleman ; "no, not that ; that young man has sandy hair and light eyes ; but look at that tall lad with the dark curled hair, and the dark eyes. Well, I am credibly informed—mark him now—he is bowing towards Lady Longwood's box—that he is a lover of Madame Dalmatian's—a great pity—fine property—and to marry an actress !"

Every word the old gentleman uttered in *confidence* to *about* fifty listeners, was repeated so rapidly, so audibly, that it reached De Courcy's ears sooner than the ears that were all on the stretch to catch it. He turned—"That is he ; that must be he," murmured the initiated ; "see how he colours !"

De Courcy cast one indignant look to-

wards the murmurers ; “ *and to marry an actress,*” rung again in his ears. He felt oppressed from every cause that could overcome the body or mind ; the intolerable heat, the whispers, his conspicuous situation, and the notoriety evidently attendant on it. He rushed out of the orchestra—a thousand feelings were swelling and burning in his bosom. The publicity of Zaira’s situation ;—her evident exultation at it,—the very applauses which she received, stung him to the soul. He was jealous of that love of fame and distinction inseparable from her character, her talents, and her profession. (*Profession!* degrading, hateful word;) he feared that it left room for no other love. He was dazzled at her superiority, that seemed to place him at an infinite distance. What interest could he hope to inspire in a being who seemed formed to live amid theatres and fetes, and pomp and palaces ? whose talents seemed destined to exalt the magnificent, to embellish the beautiful, to

irradiate the bright, and refine the voluptuous,—“ to gild refined gold, to paint the lily,” and remove the crumpled rose-leaf from the couch of the Sybarite.

He contrasted her brilliant form, as it appeared a few moments before, concentrating on itself the gaze and acclamation of a theatre, with his own, a solitary spectator, whose applause must have been like the tribute of a single wave amid the murmurs of the ocean. All society must have appeared to her compressed into an individual character, whose single feeling was delight, and whose sole language was acclamation ; could she stoop to discriminate and individualize him among the mass ?—Impossible. With a whirling brain and agitated heart, he rushed on ; the triumphant phantom seeming to pursue and torture him with its brightness. He paused from weariness ; he gazed on the beauty of the sky ; (that sky to which we always involuntarily look in suffering) the dark beauty

of a fine vernal night ; its pure stars and cool breezes seemed to utter a kind of silent reproach to the artificial luxuriance and oppressive splendour of a theatre.

“ Oh, Zaira, are you then a woman who can resign the seductive intoxications of public homage ; the applause, the crowds, that would overset the mind of man, for the enjoyment of such a scene as this in the presence of your lover alone ? Can you resign that dramatic existence, where you are too lovely, too powerful ; where you ‘ blast with excess of light,’ for the melody of the air, the murmurs of night, and the voice of your lover ? Can you feel what I feel this moment, that from your presence a world could not abstract me, and for your presence the world could not console me ? Oh, no ! I might as well ‘ love a bright particular star,’ and imagine it would descend from its sphere, and confine its light to me alone, as dream of filling the heart of Zaira.”

As he spoke, a strain of music, faint, low, and solemn, (far different from the notes to which he had just been listening) rose on his ear—human voices were heard mixed with the sound of an organ. He looked, and saw he was near a large building with lights in the windows ; he had wandered till he found himself in York-Street, near the Evangelical Meeting-house, which Eva and her family often visited. He remembered her having told him that she was to be there that evening to assist at the rehearsal of some sacred music which was to be performed the following day, accompanied by a sermon for the relief of the widows and children of those who fell at —.

* * * *

Thus the same sentiments led Zaira to the theatre, and Eva to the place of worship. They were both exercising their talents for the purpose of benevolence ; but this unity of object was the only thing in which they agreed. Which of them was best employed ? Or was not *habit* the only difference

between them ? Charles could not answer these questions, but his feelings were touched by the contrast.

He entered the meeting-house ; the congregation had dispersed (all but the private singers, who remained to practise ;) the lights, too, except a very few near the organ, where the singers stood, were all extinguished, so that the building was very dark. Round the organ there was a strong blaze of light, stronger from the contrast. Charles could see all the figures distinctly, though quite invisible to them from the darkness that filled the body of the chapel. They sung some hymns, and their solemn quiet harmony, *without applause*, the echoes, dying through the empty aisles, soothed and solemnized him. It was like a fine twilight after a burning day.

De Courcy felt as if his musical perceptions and his sensibility of nature were delightfully mingled. He felt this music to be like " the pleasant time, the cool, the si-

lent." The music suddenly changed ; they sung the Hallelujah chorus from the Messiah. The solemnity of the well-selected words,—the sublimity of the harmony,—the awful repetition of the sounds, " for ever and ever—Hallelujah ! Hallelujah !" forcing the idea of eternity on the mind by their endless recurrence, thrilled through De Courcy's heart. And when the sweet and powerful voice of Eva, sustaining the upper part, dwelt on the ascending notes, repeating, " King of Kings, and Lord of Lords ;" while all the other parts continued the ceaseless, solemn iteration, " for ever, and ever," De Courcy felt as if he listened to the songs of angels.

There was nothing round him to disturb or divide the impression on his senses or his mind ;—no crowds, no bravo's, no glare of lights, no stifling, and yet intoxicating heat. He was alone almost in darkness, and the figures so far above him, the light falling on them alone, and the unearthly

music, exalted him for some moments beyond himself. He saw Eva separated from him high in a region of light and harmony, uttering in these awful words a last farewell, and returning to that God from whom her rash and unhappy love had divided her for a season.

“Am I then losing her?” he exclaimed, with horror.

“For ever and ever,” repeated the voices,—“*For ever and ever !*”

The lights swam before his eyes. He retired to a remoter part of the chapel, and, kneeling on the ground, prayed to Almighty God, to enlighten his understanding, and to touch his heart; and enable him, in this awful crisis of his life, to refuse the evil, and choose the good. Alas! he did not know, that when we implore God to search our hearts, it is because we dread to search them ourselves. He prayed fervently, indeed, and wept; but when we make our imagination the interpreter

between the Deity and us, its oracles are not always infallible. He prayed that his passions might be subdued; but perhaps, like St Augustine, he wished that his prayers might not be heard too soon.

CHAPTER V.

They say she's fair and glorious ; woe is me,
I am but formed as simple maidens are.

MISS BAILLIE.

SIR RICHARD LONGWOOD, some years before this, had borrowed six thousand pounds from Mr Wentworth, for which he paid ten per cent. in the way of annuity. He had sustained some losses from his tenants lately, and found the payment of this six hundred pounds a-year very troublesome. He represented this to Mr Wentworth, who, perhaps, proud of obliging a man of rank, or conscience-touched by some plain passages in the Scripture about usury, consented to take the usual interest for the money, instead of the ten per cent.

Sir Richard breakfasted the next morning at Wentworth's, to settle the business, and sign the writings for this new arrangement. Sir Richard was in high spirits, and very anxious to show his gratitude at the least possible expence, by a marked attention to Mrs Wentworth and Eva, and by making a parade of how happy it would make Lady Longwood and her daughters, to show every attention, &c. &c. ; and that Lady Longwood proposed herself the honour of waiting on Mrs Wentworth ; and this poor embarrassed man, who was borrowing money from the family, thought he could dazzle them by the display of the splendour of his rank, and his wife's parties.

Eva was silent—Mrs Wentworth bowed. Then Sir Richard, who thought that when females were present the conversation must always be a trickle of common-places on public amusements, began with the theatre incontinently—" They had heard Madame

Dalmatiani, no doubt.”—“ No !”—astonished—“ Never go to the theatre? not even to hear Madame Dalmatiani?—Oh! they must go ; Lady Longwood would take them in her carriage—they must go some night with her.”

No ! even the irresistible carriage, and the tempting patronage of Lady Longwood, were unavailing. *Mrs Wentworth never went to the theatre !*

Astonished again ; as much as a polite man could be. “ But then they would like to meet her in private. She was quite an intimate of theirs ; with them constantly ; so charming, such a beautiful, *talented creature* ; they must meet her, and Lady Longwood would be so happy.”

Every sentence begun and ended with this phrase, as if Lady Longwood's whole hopes of happiness in this world and the next were dependent on her forming an intimacy with plain, retired Mrs Wentworth. “ She is peculiarly interesting just

now; said to be forming an attachment; but I never can believe her to be such a fool; a woman of her sense, and of her fortune."

Eva now began to make so many mistakes in the management of the breakfast-table, that Mrs Wentworth was obliged to take it into her own hands, and fixing her calm, steady eye on Sir Richard, she tried to draw his attention from her niece. "Her wealth is unquestionable," said Mrs Wentworth, forcing herself to join in the conversation; "but a woman of genius is not always a woman of sense."

"Admirably observed. A little more cream, if you please. I give you great credit for that remark. It would neither be for the honour of her genius or her sense, if she suffered herself to be ensnared by a boy like De Courcy; a dissipated, idle, wild young fellow, with nothing upon earth to recommend him but his fine figure, and a pair of black eyes; and he was to be

married as soon as he came of age to a Methodist lady, I heard. The poor Methodist would have a heavy weight of him on her hands or her conscience."

Eva's agitation became very great; but Sir Richard, quite pleased with himself and his conversational talents, and small-talk fluency, went on triumphantly. He really knew nothing of De Courcy's character and talents, but he remembered that the speculation to get him to marry one of his daughters had failed; and he was therefore willing to abuse him. Taking breath, he turned to Eva, and pressed her to accept of a ticket, and a seat in Lady Longwood's box for that evening; the last evening of Madame Dalmatiani's performance; the last, *last* opportunity you will ever have of seeing her in Ireland, said Sir Richard, with energy he deemed irresistible. He was surprised at Eva's cold, declining bow; he thought her a fool; and, turning to Mr Wentworth, he went on in

a whispering, confidential tone ;—" All the women spoiling him—sets up for an Adonis—quite too effeminate for a handsome man—so dissipated, racking out his greyhound-figure and baby-constitution in every excess—die of old age, before he comes *of age*—so volatile—Now, all for books ; now for billiards ; now for blue-stockings ; now for black-legs—Ha, ha ! you understand me ?"

" I don't understand one word of it," said Mr Wentworth.

" Hey, well ! you understand this : The gross absurdity of his falling in love with a Methodist at eighteen, and then turning out in ~~18~~ the lover of an actress, and leaving the poor Methodist to trim her black-bonnet with willow, or die to the tune of one of Wesley's hymns."

Eva got up and left the room. Sir Richard felt an awkward indefinable consciousness of some meprise ; he knew not what it was, but he resolved to try another

subject directly. "Sorry to see Miss Wentworth looking so ill; quite altered since he had the pleasure of seeing her?" This was said in a fine tone of sentiment and sympathy.

Mrs Wentworth, *always for the truth*, above all shuffling mysteries and delicate embarrassments, and neither knowing or caring whether Sir Richard's allusions were those of malice or ignorance, quietly said, "Mr De Courcy had proposed for her niece, and any reports, unfounded as they might be, were—must be very distressing to her." Sir Richard tacked instantly, with all the ability of a skilful navigator.

"He was sorry—sorry from his very soul. He did not know a worthier, finer young fellow than de Courcy. All that he had said was merely just as one talks—heard it from Lady Long"—(he checked) "from somebody he did not know who—mere tattle—all a falsehood, no doubt. A fine young man—a fine property. I wish,"

(the wish rising to Sir Richard's lips, he wisely kept to himself, and he added, in his best tone)—“and I am sure, if he is a little wild, Miss Wentworth's merit and beauty will make quite a convert of him.” And Sir Richard bowed with that graceful, courtly inclination which made so often a fine ineffectual figure at the levees of the lord-lieutenant.

Mrs Wentworth's contempt for *this* weak, worldly man, was increasing beyond her power of suppressing it, except by silence. Mr Wentworth was all the while preparing for a speech *pour l'occasion*. His mouth opened and shut with various contortions; at last he got out,—“Mr De Courcy proposed for my niece, but he has had an awful fall.”

“A fall!”—exclaimed Sir Richard.—“Good God, you alarm me. Where—when?—I never heard of this. Was he materially injured?”

“Mortally,” said Mr Wentworth, with

unshaken gravity; "it was a *fall from grace*."

"Oh," said the Baronet, recovering himself, with a vacant laugh,— "Is that all?— he may retrieve that; at all events, he has not fallen from the *good graces* of the ladies."

A rap at the door. Sir Richard's man-of-business bowing at the half-opened door with a bundle of parchments depending low. Mrs Wentworth knew the signal, and retired, not before she was overwhelmed by the Baronet's apologies, assurances (needless assurances) that he had spoken *without thought*; regrets, (quite sincere,) that he *had committed himself*, and entreaties that she would make his peace with her *charming interesting* niece.

"Now to business, Sir Richard, if you please," said Wentworth's peremptory voice.

His wife took the hint, and closed the door. She enquired for Eva. Miss Wentworth had gone out; she had gone out in

the hope of forcing her mind from painful thoughts by an application to her habitual duties, yet she was beginning to experience every day the power of feeling over habit. One of her old pensioners she had lately lodged in a room in Capel-Street, and visited her every day to read the Bible, and listen to a long detail of her rheumatism ; but never had she moved so slowly, or felt so reluctantly, as she did this day going on her usual visit. As she arrived at the door, she felt in the silk bag on her arm (which she never called a ridicule) for the small pocket-Bible which she always carried in these visits, and it struck her that, for *the first time*, she had omitted to double down the passages which she conceived most applicable to the situation of the poor sufferer. She was embarrassed, and more so when, on turning over the pages, the texts seemed to wander before her in a kind of melancholy confusion. Was this the book which she had studied

day and night, and of which she was now unable to turn over the pages, and know one from the other?

She felt ashamed of this confusion, and as she sought out in vain the passages which she had hoped to press on the feelings of her pensioner, she trembled to think that she might search thus in vain for topics of direction or consolation when she needed them, and *that need might be near.*

"James," said she to the servant who had attended her, "you need not wait; my aunt will call for me here;" and she went to the room she had hired for this poor woman.

It was a singular sight to see so young, so very young, so beautiful a creature, ascending the miserable stairs up to the very garret, to visit an old, sick, querulous, ungrateful woman. Yes, ungrateful;—for, alas! not always is charity repaid by gratitude, or religious influence, though enforced by all the beauty of youthful eloquence,

successful. Eva entered ; we must give the dialogue verbatim.

“ How do you find yourself to-day, Mrs Morton ?” said a voice that might have inspired health and joy, like Magdalen’s among the City of the Plague.

“ AUGH !” (the unsatisfactory Irish augh, that implies a thousand complaints, dissatisfactions, and miseries, without expressing one) “ augh ! bad enough, miss.”

“ I am glad to see your room so neat and comfortable, and that you have arranged the little furniture I sent you so tidily.”

“ Yes, miss, the girl put up them little things ; but I had rather see the bit of green before the door of the poor place you took me from, than that box and chairs.”

“ Well, but the place I took you from was three inches thick of mud on the floor ; you remember you told me your rheumatic pains were brought on by living in that damp wretched place.”

“ Yes, miss ; Oh, God bless you !—you

were very good ; but I was *asy* there, somehow."

" I have sent these myrtles to you, and had them put into your window to console you for the *green bit* ; you know it was merely a puddle in winter, and you used to complain how the children annoyed you by tearing up the clods and stuffing them into the holes of your windows."

" Oh yes, Miss, but then—Augh, the children were a comfort to me any how."

Eva knew not what to say next ; but she reverted to the cleanliness of the room, and the spotless whiteness of the boards.

" Oh yes, Miss ; the girl you sent was washing them this morning, and my pains are much worse since—Augh, God help me, and it does not do for one like me to be kept *over clane*, Miss, this way."

Eva was not discouraged ; religion had taught her more " than was dreamt of in philosophy ;" she was accustomed to bear with every weakness, physical and mental,

and as the sum of all her consolation, she asked the old woman if she should read her a chapter of the Bible?

"Oh yes, Honey, but don't let them be long."

Eva paused.

"No offence dear, I hope; only I'm old."

"Oh no; no," said Eva, her countenance brightening into angelic lustre—"old or young, you know we all are mortal, all hastening to an immortal state—time is hastening from us—eternity is approaching—let us try to prepare for it—we are all sinners, all sufferers"——

The old woman sat upright, bolt upright, in her bed with astonishment. "Sinners!" she repeated—"Oh yes, that we are, all of us! But sufferers? Oh, Miss Honey, how can you talk of suffering? Have you ever had sorrow, and sickness, and want, and the loss of husband, and child, and grandchild?"—she pursued, reckoning each

separate loss on her bony, withered, outspread fingers—"and the rheumatism beside?" added the old woman, sinking back on her bed—yet raising one warning hand, "Oh, how can *you* talk of suffering?"

Eva burst into tears; then she collected her voice, and said, as calmly as she could, "If I have not yet known it, it is very possible I soon may."

She then prevailed on this poor unfeeling old creature to *suffer* her to read the Bible to her; and, while thus employed, her youthful, almost infantine loveliness, the touching tones of her voice, to which sorrow had already given its premature and peculiar modulation; the chaste and feeling solemnity in her manner; the mild and anxious expression of her bright blue eyes, as she softly raised them to watch the effect of those words on the hearer's heart, which fell on her own like drops of balm;—all contrasted strongly with the selfishness, querulousness, and heartlessness of the old invalid.

Her harsh, wrinkled features, in which no expression but that of physical pain could be traced, her vacant, yet wandering eye, fixed on Eva's from time to time as if in forced attention ; then rambling round the room as if she wanted something, but would not tell what, her weak, restless, ghastly look, her evident destitution of all religious feeling, and forced attempt to submit to its forms for the time, contrasted with the look of Eva, would have made a subject for a painter : it seemed like the young Angel of the Reformation struggling with the hostile, repugnant, obstinate spirit of the ancient superstition.

Her task ended, (and Eva, sighing as she rose from her knees, felt *it was a task*,) she retired. With what different feelings they parted ! The old invalid wondering at Eva's insensibility to the blessings of youth and health, and Eva feeling how these blessings might be withered by that blight of the heart, which made youth and health already fade in her sight.

She descended the narrow stairs with a sigh. She had not felt that comfort in her religious exercises which she had been accustomed to. She had knelt by many such beds, and, though she had not always given consolation, she had always felt it. Like Saul, in seeking after asses, she had found a kingdom. It was not so now. Whatever bed she knelt beside, whatever prayers she uttered, De Courcy was kneeling beside her, and repeating the words in mockery. This figure was continually before her. She trembled at times, not for the obvious wandering of her reason, for of this she was not conscious, but for the derangement of her religious feelings. In fact, the seeds of decline were already laid in her constitution, from the force of that silent struggle which she was undergoing, and which none could long undergo, but she felt only her increasing insensibility of religious feeling. When she got to the door, there was a

heavy shower, an indication of continued rain.

By some accident Mrs Wentworth had neglected to call for her in the carriage—(the Wentworths kept a plain brown carriage, drawn by two sleek horses; they advertised for a *serious* coachman, and they had got one, a very grave man, who had been converted *secundum artem* years before; and, for the horses, they knew their way to Bethesda without a driver). Eva was greatly embarrassed by this disappointment. Though humble equally in her habits and spirits, she could not bear the idea of walking the streets alone. She went timidly into the shop to wait till the shower was over. In the shop were Lady Longwood and her daughters, and their splendid equipage at the door. Nothing was ever like the polite pleasure of Lady Longwood and her daughters at the meeting.

"We must set you down; but where? where shall I set you down?"

Lady Longwood, all delighted as she was at the meeting, had forgot where Eva lived.

"Dominick street, mamma," said the Miss Longwoods in a breath.

"Oh, true, Dominick street,—we must set you down. I wish," said Lady Longwood, speaking as far from her wishes as possible, "I wish I could prevail on you to allow me to order the carriage to Merion Square, instead of to"—(again she forgot, and the Miss Longwoods again whispered Dominick street). "Do, be prevailed on; let us run away with you, and send any imaginable, or unimaginable excuse to your aunt. Madame Dalmatiani dines with us; and it is the last evening you will have any chance of seeing her on the Irish stage."

Lady Longwood pressed her request with such polite energy, that no one could

have imagined it was pressed to be refused. Eva certainly did not understand it *as wished*; a thought, a wish of her own was struggling at the bottom of her heart. She did not know how to name it, and was rejoiced to hear it named by another. When this thought first occurred to her, she repelled it as *a sin*—then she suffered it to linger in her mind as impossible, and, therefore, as admissible merely to *think* of—then she admitted it as neither sinful, or impossible; but merely as a floating dream—then she began to think that dream might be realized.

When people of this character once break the bounds imposed on them, or the bounds they have imposed on themselves, there is no saying the extent to which they will go; farther, perhaps, than those who have laid down no determined rules, and, therefore, know not exactly the bounds they transgress.

Eva had an unconquerable wish infused

suddenly into her mind of seeing Madame Dalmatiani. She knew not what she meant by this wish ; but felt indiscriminately, like Mrs Saintly in Dryden's play, that " the motion was of good." Sir Richard's offer, Lady Longwood's politeness—every thing seeming to correspond with her wishes ;—with *her wish*, for she had but one,—she yielded to it.

Lady Longwood's carriage was announced by two footmen. " Do—let us have the pleasure"—(of setting you down, her politeness *would have said*)—" of taking you home," her politeness *did say*.

Eva, trembling at her own temerity, said rapidly—" Your ladyship is very good—you have anticipated my request—I was just going to entreat that—"

" Then you will dine with us, and go to see Madame Dalmatiani," said the Miss Longwoods together. " Oh, how delightful!—Come, mamma? Miss Wentworth will

come with us." And, in their good-natured vacancy of mind, they said no more than they felt.

Lady Longwood, with due politeness, saw her visitor first into her carriage, and followed herself.

Now, at last, they were in the carriage. Eva, trembling at her situation—at her companions—trembling at herself; she was giddy, speechless for some moments. The only sensation she had, was that a carriage was rapidly whirling her along, but where she knew not, or why. The prattle of the Miss Longwoods was the first thing to recall her. They reminded mamma, that Miss Wentworth would like to call in Darnick-Street for *her dress*, as she could not go to the theatre in a wrapper. Then Eva first began to feel the consequences of the step she had taken, and to dread them with a dread passing that of women. Though exquisitely neat in her person, she never

had worn a dress that displayed the neck and arms, and she had now to confess this poverty of her wardrobe to Lady Longwood and her daughters, in whose eyes it would be little less than the unpardonable sin.

"Why do I feel ashamed?" said she to herself, as she was making this confession. "I *ought not* to feel ashamed;" yet she did, and this false shame was even more tormenting than true, for it had none of its ingenuous consolation. She had no time to pause. Miss Longwood's hand was on the check-string. "I beg your pardon; I have no occasion to give you this trouble. My dresses are all made—*like this*," (the last words very low); "and if I must change mine, I must trespass on you for the means."

Now it was out, and she congratulated herself on her courage; courage, indeed, if one might judge by the countenances of the Miss Longwoods. Had Eva confessed

herself guilty of wearing no clothes at all, their looks could not have been more petrifying and petrified; it was risibility mingled with horror.

At length their feelings, at first too great for words, found way in a broken exclamation—"And you never wear any thing but morning dresses?"

Eva, having got over the worst of it as she thought, was able to say "Never!" with tolerable firmness. "All made just like this, with long sleeves and high collars." Yes—Eva pleaded guilty to the whole charge.—High collars and long sleeves included, "*just like this.*"

Finding the case thus desperate, the Miss Longwoods tried to attain some composure of mind by going a little into detail, and gathering courage to look this sad business in the face—"Who makes your gowns?"

"A poor woman, whom I"—

"The waist is too long," said Miss Longwood.

“ And the sleeves not wide enough,” added Caroline.

“ A poor woman, whom I”——

“ There is not fullness enough behind ; and the skirt ought to be six inches shorter,” interrupted the Miss Longwoods.

“ A poor woman, whom I employ for charity.”

“ In charity to yourself then, my dear,” said Lady Longwood, laughing, “ never employ her again ; she has absolutely made a figure of you.”

Eva every moment was feeling more and more the unpleasantness of the consequences that must follow the step she had taken ; to throw herself among people that had not one thought, feeling, pursuit, or habit, in common with her. Her mind was forced to subjects on which it had never dwelt before, and she saw things in a light of artificial importance, which she had always been accustomed to consider as trivial. Inconsequential and fri-

valous as Lady Longwood and her daughters were, and as she felt them to be, she yet was embarrassed by their observations, and mortified by their laughter; contemptible as they appeared, it was painful to feel oneself an object of contempt even to them. She would have purchased immunity from it, by giving up her mantua-maker, and then she checked and blamed herself for this as a worldly feeling. Thus, in the struggles of false shame, and genuine self-reproach, commenced her entrance into the world, and it had scarce commenced before she repented of it.

The rest of the drive was passed in discussing the merits of different dress-makers; but not even this could appease the astonishment of the Miss Longwoods, at the discovery that a human being could live, and walk, and talk, though it never wore any thing but a muslin wrapper; and Caroline, as her foot was on the step

of the carriage alighting, could not help repeating to herself—"Good God! and not even a bit of lace on the sleeves!"

Arrived at Lady Langwood's, everything around her seemed more and more to distract and dazzle Eva. The pompous officiousness of the servants; the getting out of the carriage, and crossing the broad pavement, where a party of young men stopped to make observations on them; entering the echoing hall; and ascending the lofty stone staircase, where the sound of her own steps startled her.—The whole of her entrée assisted to discompose, and almost terrify her. She felt herself in a new world, and a world so different from her own. Her head swam round; and the elation of her senses seemed like a species of intoxication. She dreaded her self-possession; thought every thing round her was in a kind of dazzling mist; and that all the figures appeared very bright, and

all with an intention to turn her into mockery. She dreaded that the answers she returned to the simplest questions were absurd ; and Lady Longwood's polite, perpetual smile, seemed to her like a fixed and bitter laugh of derision. She wished a thousand times that she was at home again ; then laughed at herself for fear of being laughed at ; and then felt disposed to weep. She knew not where she was ; it was all like a dream. She felt for some moments as if she was in the power of evil spirits. She struggled strongly with her feelings, and overcame them, but not without a solemn stipulation with her conscience, that she would never again hazard herself in such society.

She never had a future opportunity.—Dinner was to be unusually early on account of the party to the theatre. Lady Longwood and her daughters standing round the fire, went into a committee of

dress. "I would wish," said Eva, "if your ladyship will allow me, to write a few lines to my aunt, to account for my absence."

"Certainly, my dear! roll over that writing-table for yourself near the fire. Your note shall be sent this moment; and pray tell Mrs Wentworth how happy we are to have you."

Eva, not without awe, dipped the crow-quill into the beautiful china ink-stand, and wrote on paper, so highly glazed, she could hardly trace a few lines, to tell Mrs Wentworth where she was. She attempted to add *why*, but could not.

Mrs Wentworth read the note; comprehended the contents; shook her head; and told Mr Wentworth on his return, that Eva dined out, without mentioning where. In the mean time, the Miss Longwoods had showed Eva to their dressing-room, and ran back to Mamma, to know what they were to do with her. "Why, my dear!

lend her some of your old things ; *any* thing ; *your clothes will hang like bags about her*, and make her such a figure !”

Honorie did not at all relish the observation on their comparative figures, and answered somewhat sullenly—“What am I to lend her, *ma'am* ?”

“There’s your pink satin, my dear ; it is quite soiled.”

“My pink satin, *ma'am* !” repeated Honorie, retreating full three paces, and measuring her mother with a look of astonishment—“Pink satin ! Why, *ma'am*, do you think me mad to lend her that, and *she* so fair, just to make us look like yellowed warfs ? I had rather go with her in that muslin wrapper.”

“Do as you like, Miss Longwood,” said her mother, cutting the matter short—“only do this ; behave with propriety to Miss Wentworth, and furnish her with what is proper for her appearance in public *with*

us. Your father is under great obligations to her uncle, and"—Lady Longwood checked herself prudently.

"Lord, mamma!" said Caroline, "what obligations can papa have to her uncle? that grim old methodist. He must be as poor as Job, to suffer his niece to trot about the streets a pind, and wear nothing but wrappers up to the throat."

"Good God!" said Lady Longwood, more aware of *the truth* than her daughters, and losing all her reticence—"Good God, Caroline! what a fool you are, and what nonsense you do talk!"

With this castigation and remark, the Miss Longwoods returned to the dressing-room. They attempted at first to dazzle Eva, by a display of their finery, and an affected debate on what they should wear, though that had been revolved and determined in their secret souls for many a day before. Then they tried to overpower her with their advice about her own appear-

ance. Both attempts were vain. She selected the very simplest of the dresses offered her ; took no notice that it was too large for her ; arranged her hair in the simplest manner ; and then offered her assistance to the Miss Longwoods. The polite young ladies laughed at her, " We could never dress without mamma's woman—Fleming will be here directly—Ring for her, Caroline."

Enter Fleming. Eva stared, was going to offer her a seat. A slight, graceful, very affected personage, with her waist up to her chin, a large broach marking the broad division of her corset, and her short petticoats shewing her nice ancles and silk stockings eight inches above what they ought to have been seen. Then came on the business of the Miss Longwoods' toilets,—a business, indeed. Eva was wearied, provoked, diverted, terrified—wearied by its length, provoked by the impatience of the fair patients, diverted by their folly, terrified by the tre-

mendous sight of beings approaching to eternity, who seemed to put the arrangement of a ringlet in competition with all other interests, mortal and immortal.

"This must be very stupid for Miss Wentworth," said Honoria, after a fretful speech about the arrangement of the flowers in her hair.

"Oh, not at all stupid," said Caroline; "she has got a book, you see."

Eva had got a book—a neglected book! It was a small Bible that lay on Miss Longwood's table, and was regularly produced at the Asylum Chapel (a fashionable Chapel in Dublin,) once a week. Its gilded leaves had complete repose for the rest of the week, and very little disturbance then.

Miss Fleming, *her task* being finished, advanced to Eva. "Sure, ma'am, you'll not go down that figure! If you please, ma'am, allow me to assist. Such a figure! Excuse me, ma'am—Look at Miss Longwood's shoulders."—Eva looked and shud-

dered.—“ Then, ma’am, your sleeves. Look, only look, ma’am, at Miss Longwood’s arms—within two inches of the shoulder,”—Fleming said, and pointed to arms so bare that Eva really believed they were only exposed thus for the purpose of being washed. All her polite persuasions were thrown away. The Miss Longwoods smiled in conscious superiority.—“ A little rouge, ma’am, the least tinge only ; not but what I know it is not *the thing* for young ladies, but then, just on this occasion.”

“ Thank you, Miss Fleming,” said Eva, retreating ; “ but, *on this occasion*, I feel it quite unnecessary.”

And she said no more than she felt and *looked*.—Her colour, “ celestial rosy red,” was in a moment exchanged for her usual exquisite paleness—a tint so pure, that one would have thought Eden had produced none but the white rose before the fall, and the red bore the blushing mark of man’s first degeneracy.

The dinner bell rang. Miss Fleming was

fluent in exclamation at its ringing so soon. Then she remembered the party to the play, and again pressed her offers of assistance on Eva.

Eva, thus compelled to notice her own appearance, threw a glance for a moment on Miss Longwood's tall mirror, and turned away. Her first impression at the sight of her own figure, in comparatively modern costume, was terror, absolute terror. She had hardly looked at herself while the Miss Longwoods were arranging her dress, now she looked. The second impression was pleasure. Her beautiful neck and arms, displayed to her own view, for the first time ! She was astonished. She looked on herself as she would on a beautiful embellished portrait of herself. Eva was not so ignorant as to be unconscious of her personal advantages ; but those advantages, displayed by a mode of dress so new to her, gave her almost a sensation of guilt. She trembled at the reflection of her figure. Many texts of scrip-

ture, many habitual feelings, rushed on her at this moment ; and, catching up her thick shawl, she folded herself so completely that no eye could discover her change of dress.

Another dinner bell—The ladies left the dressing-room.

The company below was not numerous, but they appeared a very formidable number to Eva. She got to a seat as fast as her trembling feet could carry her, and succeeded in escaping all notice till dinner-time. The dinner ! What a business ! The blaze of plate—the numerous attendants—dishes, of which she did not know the ingredients—wines, of which she did not know the names—then she saw every one using forks only with fish, and, with instinctive promptitude, she laid down her knife, and scarce knew whether she ought to take it up again when she had meat on her plate. She had remained standing too, a considerable time, waiting for grace ; for she could not believe that a few hasty words

muttered by a man in black, (just like all the other men,) who bowed his essenced ringlets over a dish as if he was examining into its merits, could be supposed an acknowledgment of the bounty of the Deity. She had committed innumerable other petty treasons against *bienveillance*. She had not the happy art of sitting at dinner ; her ear declined to one ; her eye fixed on another ; her hand slowly conveying minute morsels to her half-open lips ; and her head and heart, amid this divided attention, full of nothing but herself ; applying her lips to the edge of a wine glass, with two drops in the bottom of it, and slightly inclining her head by way of drinking healths ; and then taking off a dozen of rings, and scattering the bright confusion beside her plate, while she immersed the tip of one finger in the water-glass.

She had sat down to dine as well as her fright would let her ; but that fright was now increased to a pitiable degree by the

discovery of her artless deficiencies. She imagined the eyes of every one were fixed on her ; she felt as if they had been invited merely to expose her. With this awful sense of her own inferiority, was mingled a strong perception of the frivolity of the beings who were thus looking down on her. Not a word was uttered, which, divested of its fashionable jargon, would not be in plain English downright nonsense or commonplace. When she contrasted the trifling subjects with the affected accents, and exclamations of assumed interest about them, she could scarce consider the scene before her but as a scene on a stage ; and felt a thousand times as if she could say, “ speak in your natural voices, and on intelligible subjects, and let me understand you.”

In spite, however, of her abstraction, embarrassment and diffidence, the delight with which she was beheld, at least by the men, might have inspired confidence into any female but herself.

Lady Longwood's quick eye caught it in a moment. She spoke to one of the servants, and the carriages were announced directly.

Eva's heart beat with terrible agitation as they rapidly approached the theatre. The tumult at the entrance was a relief to her. The carriages were locked to the end of Fowne's-street. Equipage after equipage drove off, yet such was the crowd, that Lady Longwood's coachman could scarce advance six inches at a move. At length they were opposite the entrance,—were alighting amidst the bustle of guards, servants, and orange-women, the vociferation of "play-bills," and the glare of lamps and flambeaux—were hurried through the passage—were in their box.

The house was crowded, and the last bars of the overture were playing. What a scene for Eva! The heat, the glare, the tumult, the calls on the boxkeeper, the disputes about seats, the struggles in the pit,

the uproar in the galleries, the tremendous burst from the orchestra in the full storm of the final chords, just below them, (for they were in the stage-box), reduced her to a state between stupefaction and terror. She grasped Lady Longwood's arm, and panted for breath.

"Are you alarmed?" said Lady Longwood, smiling. "Keep up your spirits; you will soon see Madame Dalmatiani."

That name recalled her indeed, recalled her to a state of far keener suffering, and she felt in a moment, how far more exquisite is the sense arising from mental, than from physical causes.

The curtain rose—Eva gazed, her whole soul and eyes fixed on its movements. The opera was Artaxerxes, and Zaira appeared on the stage. The lights were down to represent twilight, and at first Eva could only see the dim glitter of her splendid dress, that suggested the image of a spirit in the shades of Elysium. But long before

the lights arose, the delicious tones of her voice made Eva feel she must be beautiful; and when they did, the first glance was enough—too much for her. She felt all was over—there was no hope—her heart subsided—sunk within her. She felt that, with the “might, the majesty of loveliness,” displayed in that perfect form, all competition was folly or frenzy.

“Is she not beautiful?” said the Miss Longwoods.

“Beautiful,” repeated Eva, “beyond imagination; almost beyond humanity!” But as she spoke, the tears started into her eyes.

The piece proceeded, and Eva grew calm; but it was the calmness of despair. There was nothing in the opera that particularly alluded to the situation of De Courcy and Zaira; and she was thus spared any added emotion, till, at the commencement of the second act, a gentleman behind Eva said,

“ Now she will exert herself to the utmost, for I see De Courcy behind the scenes.”

Eva looked up ; saw De Courcy behind the scenes. The stage-box, in which Lady Longwood sat, commanded a perfect view of *behind the scenes* on the opposite side.

De Courcy stood there, leaning against a side-scene, “ his rapt soul sitting in his eyes.” All his powers of body and soul seemed concentrated into one burning look, and that look was fixed on Zaira. Some young men of his acquaintance, who were lounging behind the scenes, came up and attempted to draw his attention ; he turned from them impatiently. Some pretty young actresses, who were dressed, and waiting to join in the choruses, tried to fix his attention ; he smiled superior on them. The opera went on : Zaira’s powers were evidently increased, increasing. She was singing *con amore* ; yet a particular opportunity of allusion was wanting, till the duet of “ For thee I live, my dearest.” Then Zaira, when repeating,

“ how lovely thou appearest,” turned her love-radiant eyes, not on Arbaces, but on De Courcy, and the expression could not be mistaken. The audience perceived she sung with peculiar onction. Eva alone felt at the bottom of her wrung heart the difference of her style, and the cause of it. When Zaira came to the beautiful air of “ Let not rage,”—so sweet and exquisite was her voice, that Eva could scarce repress the exclamation,—“ Ah, be not so melting, so beautiful, so resistless !—What needs it ?—I am overcome already, and so is he—so he must be—all this is superfluous.” And when Zaira came to the passage in the minor key, just before the ritornello, “ I, alas ! at once have lost father, brother, lover, friend,” the piercing expression of her voice thrilled every heart—what effect had it on Eva’s ! She could not restrain her tears at these words thus sung ; and yet she felt, that the woman who uttered these thrilling tones was inflicting on her

the very losses she was drawing artificial tears from others for; tears, real tears, rapidly gushed into her eyes. *He was all to her.* She struggled for a moment, felt the struggle impossible, leaned forward, and wept in bitter unrestrained anguish. She recovered with a violent effort, and forcing her eyes on the stage, saw Zaira retiring amid thunders of applause; and De Courcy, snatching eagerly the shawl from her servant, folding it round her with tender care, and drawing her arm under his, attended her to the Green-room. After that she saw nothing,—all was glare, delirium. She heard voices speaking to her, but could distinguish no words; she spoke to herself, but knew not what she was saying; but she had a frightful indefinite consciousness that she was smiling in every one's face, while the smile felt to her like a convulsion. The carriages were ordered. A great bustle about setting her down,—an attempt on her part at gratitude. She knew not what

she said, or where she was going. The images of the night were flashing before, around her ; they seemed within her brain. She gazed round her—she was at last in her own quiet apartment—she did not know it—she sunk on her knees—she could not pray—she rose, terrified at her own feelings ; and she recollected this was the first day she had ever passed among beings, where the name of God was never uttered, and among whom his existence appeared to be utterly forgotten.

CHAPTER VI.

Yet she that loves him best is Cleopatra.—DRYDEN,

How little Eva knew of Zaira's feelings or purposes! How singular was it that each of them was the object of envy to the other; that each would have given worlds to exchange with the other! Zaira, determined to resign De Courcy, imagined all happiness was concentrated in the destiny of the woman to whom she resigned him. Eva, comparatively ignorant of life, but possessing that tact of the heart which makes an idiot of experience, felt that she had lost *his*; and though ignorant of Zaira's resolution, scorned to accept any thing but that heart. But Zaira, though determined on resigning him for ever, could not prevail on

herself to give up the happiness she felt in his society ; in the short period that was to precede their separation, she was resolved to enjoy it with luxurious exaggeration, and splenetic voluptuousness ; to dissolve the richest of pearls in the bitter cup of parting, and swallow it. Zaira had courage and strength of soul for great sacrifices, but she had not that domestic resignation that can submit to sacrifices every hour and every moment, and condemn the heart to die by inches. This accounts for her continuing to accept even the public attentions of De Courcy, and perhaps to feel a bitter pleasure to the very moment when they were to part. Thus each of them felt as if they were making a sacrifice to the other ; a word would have decided their destinies, and perhaps led to happier results, but then their situations forbid all communication, and Zaira's resolution, taken in secret, precluded an explanation even with De Courcy.

The morning after the opera, De Courcy

went, as usual, to Zaira's; he felt an uncommon depression; and the words in which her late performance had been announced, seemed to recur involuntarily to his recollection, with a kind of melancholy indefinite impression—*Madame Dalmatiani, her last appearance in Dublin.* De Courcy knew she had retired from the stage, but he thought there was something like an omen in these words. She was not in her usual apartment; through the half-open folding-doors he caught a glimpse of her in the next room; she stood at a table covered with parchments, a candle was lighting, two or three men stood near her whom he did not know, and among them one whom he recognised in a moment; it was the man whose hard treatment from Mr Wentworth he had mentioned to Zaira, and been so much surprised at the insensibility with which she listened to him. He comprehended the whole in a moment, and he was right. He leaned against the

door—the men of business were so engaged with their papers, they did not notice him ; and Zaira, who had a book in her hand, as usual, did not notice him either.

After some delay, her agent told her the papers were ready for signature. She put a mark in her book, approached the table, glanced her eye over the words, “ Deed of Annuity,” and turned to her agent with an expression of surprise and displeasure.

The agent drew her aside for a moment, and tried to explain to her, as well as his amazement would suffer him, the folly, the madness of *losing* (as he called it,) her money at six per cent., when she might get ten, twelve, or fourteen for it ; and at the magic sound of fourteen per cent., the lawyer actually rose on tiptoe, displaced his wig in the agitation of his delight, and whispered the words to Zaira, in a tone between a whistle and a squeal, with an emphatic compression of the lips invincibly ludicrous.

Zaira turned from him, without saying a word, approached the table, and made her meaning plain in few words, as integrity and benevolence never fail to do. She said, it was not her wish to affect relieving this gentleman's distress, while she increased it by usurious and consuming interest ; she would take his bond for the principal, and nothing but legal interest for the money.

Having thus said, with a strong intellectual habit, which seemed involuntary, she took the mark out of the book, went on reading, and desired to be told when it was necessary to sign her name. A new deed was drawn, signed, witnessed,—Zaira put her name to the paper, the legal men lifting up their eyes, and twisting their fingers, with feelings inexpressible. The money was produced, and put into the hands of the wretched man, who could not even then believe his eyes. He attempted to speak, to thank her,—could not utter a word,—tried to bow, as he retired ; and felt

himself ready to sink on his knees ;—as he rushed out of the door, he almost fell over De Courcy ; recovered himself, and his powers of speech instantly ; grasped his hand in the confidence of his happiness, and poured out that tempest of gratitude, which Irish tongues alone can utter, and Irish ears alone can bear. At the end of a speech, which may be spared the English reader, he repeated often, “ I thank God, and you and her.” It was delightful to De Courcy to hear Zaira’s name and his thus joined, and he grasped the man’s hand with eager cordiality.

The man hurried away, for he saw Zaira entering. She perceived, in a moment, that he had been a witness to the last scene. There was some embarrassment on both sides, till De Courcy, recovering himself, burst into praises, as eloquent as passion could utter. He felt eager to magnify his impressions if possible. Her virtues seemed to furnish a justification of what

he felt he could not justify to himself. Zaira was absent, and embarrassed; she listened to him with a kind of melancholy abstraction, and then said somewhat abruptly, "But you have promised to pass this evening with me?"

"This evening; no, to-morrow evening you mentioned."

"To-morrow," repeated Zaira; "to-morrow! oh, no! that will be impossible—You must come to me this evening, if you wish to see me again."

De Courcy did not take notice of these words, they were so rapidly uttered; and he mentioned, though in a fainter accent, that he was to spend that evening at Mr Wentworth's.—"No matter," said Zaira abruptly; "you will have time enough to make amends there—time enough hereafter for the Wentworths—You must come to me to-night—Promise me," she added.

De Courcy promised, and went that

evening. There was a larger company than usual. Never was Zaira so brilliant, so animated; never had she looked so beautiful; yet those who were not, like De Courcy, dazzled beyond all power of inquiry or observation, might have discovered something of excitement; something artificial and *exigeant* in her manner; a demand for homage about her, that appeared totally different from the usual tone of her conversation.

All her talents seemed put in requisition. She sung; she played, though the tremor of her hands was visible; she conversed with eager rapidity, and seemed anxious to make *points* in every thing she said. The confusion of her ideas was obvious; but she struggled through it, disregarded it, and seemed anxious only to make her wit conspicuous. In all she said, or did, or sung, or looked, there was an effort unusual with her; and her flashing eyes were turned on De Courcy every

moment, with a mixture of reproach and sorrow which none could penetrate. It was after a conversation she had held with a groupe of literati on the subject of infanticide, as practised among the Eastern nations, suggested by one of the engravings in Sir George Staunton's View of China, she had widely digressed from the subject, and yet gracefully recurred to it in remarks on the practice, from the exposure of infants among the ancients, sanctioned by the laws of Lycurgus, and the practice of polished Athens and virtuous Rome, (Montgomery smiled with delight,) down to the Chinese, who more humanely attach a gourd to the female infants they commit to the water, to keep them floating on the stream, in hope of their being saved by the Christian missionaries; and to the family pride which urges a similar practice in the East Indies, where it is supposed that no suitable match can be found for the female descendants of the

Rajahs, and that it was better for them to perish than to form an inferior connection ; and she added the emphatic answer of a Rajah, who, on being consulted how the female infants of his family were to be destroyed, replied, " It is easy to crush a flower in the bud."

As she spoke, Zaira took a flower from her bosom, and bent over it to hide a tear. In a moment after, she turned away to another groupe, who were watching a game at chess, and was deep in Indian antiquities and Spanish anecdotes, and quotations from Vida's *Scacchia*, before the applause that hung on her last accents had ceased. She had embellished the subjects on which she was speaking with such variety of allusion, such extent of information, and such felicity of wit, that the hearers were actually converted into a theatrical audience, and loud applauses followed every sentence.

De Courcy turned his triumphant de-

manding eyes on Montgomery, and several near them spoke in raptures of her wit. "Wit," said Montgomery, "I heard no wit. I only heard a string of allusions, supplied by books, with which no doubt *the woman*—any well-informed woman must be acquainted. I heard no wit; every thing she said was quite plain—quite intelligible."

De Courcy could not help repeating—

"Men doubt, because they stand so thick i'the sky,
That those are stars that paint the *galaxy*."

Montgomery was piqued at the quotation, resolved to disprove it, and encounter Zaira on some literary ground where he imagined that he must be superior. She was still standing near the chess-table. He fixed on an unfortunate subject, the total ignorance among the ancients of all games of chance. Zaira mentioned the Chorus in the *Iphigenia* of Euripides, that speaks of

Palamedes and another worthy playing with dice. Montgomery, provoked, impugned even the authenticity of Euripides, and appealed to Homer, if there was the least mention of games of chance among his heroes ; and he quoted authorities enough to prove, that sad or merry, they did nothing but eat heartily, and digest their meals φορμιγγι λιγειη ; and Montgomery went on to say, they could have little intellectual resources, when it was obvious they could neither read or write. Zaira silenced him in a moment with the *σηματα λυγρα*, the letters of Bellerophon, which proved that the *ancestors* of the Homeric heroes probably knew something about writing.

Montgomery had nothing to say, (*though he might have had.*) He retreated discomfited ; and De Courcy could not help condoling him on his defeat with the well-known lines of Lope Vega, which describe, in allusion to his own name, a beetle

perishing amid the fragrance of a rose it had presumed to hover over—

“ *Audax dum Vegæ irrumpit scarabæus in hortos,
Fragrantis periit victus odore rosæ.*”

Every one applauded the application; every one the next moment applauded an air Zaira was singing. One would have said of that brilliant evening, in the language of one of the first of our poets—

“ It was her blithest, and her last.”

Music, literature, luxury, flowers—all that could delight or intoxicate, prolonged the entertainment till a late hour. De Courcy saw the Miss Longwoods to their carriage, and returned for his hat to the saloon where he had left it. Zaira was there alone, leaning against the chimney-piece, and apparently in deep and painful meditation. Not a trace of gaiety remained on her fixt fea-

tures. De Courcy approached to take his leave.—“Have you remarked any symptoms of dejection—of grief, about me to-night?” said she hastily.

“To-night? Oh, no! Never saw you more charming, more brilliant!”

“And yet all this night,” said Zaira, speaking with difficulty, and many pauses, “I have struggled to hide in the bottom of my heart, a thought—that wrings it.”

De Courcy, amazed, could make no answer. Zaira made many efforts to speak in vain. At length she uttered, in a choaked voice, “We must part to-night.”

“Part!”

“Yes,” said Zaira, who, now that she had found courage to utter one word, hurried on with eagerness—“Yes,—part,—the peace and honour of us both require it. We must part to-night.”

“Oh God!—oh Zaira!—and can you leave me? Is this the friendship—this the promise?” and, in agonies of supplication,

De Courcy prostrated himself before her, grovelled beneath her feet, and holding up his locked hands, tried to express by this action what he had not words to utter.

Zaira's heart was torn at this sight, but it was not moved. "Alas !" said she, "it must be time to part, when our parting is thus dreadful to both."

"*Both !*" De Courcy caught the sound ; it gave him new life, new hopes. Again he pleaded, he implored, he wept, and folding his arms around her, as she sunk on a sofa, clung to her in an agony that made her tremble.

"Ah, release me !" she cried, struggling in vain to extricate herself from his arms ; "release me while I have any self-possession,—leave me, if you would wish me to preserve my reason."

At these words, to which De Courcy attached a very different meaning from Zaira's, he started up, and viewed her with a look almost of indignation.

Zaira, agitated beyond the power of regarding him, faintly exclaimed,—“ If you do not wish the parting hour to be my dying hour, go leave me.”

De Courcy threw on her a look which she did not see,—a look in which anguish, appeal, supplication, were mingled with the wildest jealousy, and rushed from the house like a madman. He tossed all night on a feverish bed of agony, started from a frightful dream late in the morning, and felt, for some moments, with vague indefiniteness, that something had happened which he trembled to recall. Then the full agony of the truth broke on him in a moment. Zaira was about to leave Ireland. He hurried on his clothes, and while thus employed, he could not help noticing his feverish frame, wasted by so many causes of emotion; and the hectic, which burning in his cheek, contrasted that deadliness of feature and expression which nothing but despair can give, but which she seldom

gives to youthful features. He felt how unfit he was to plead his own cause, yet he hurried instinctively to Zaira's: The hall was full of trunks and packages,—the servants all in bustle. De Courcy's heart beat almost audibly. He hurried up stairs—those well-known stairs—that now appeared to forget his steps—that were soon to feel the steps of a stranger. He passed from room to room; in a remote one Zaira was seated: She had a book in her hand, which she laid down at the sight of De Courcy. She forced, with a convulsive effort, a smile on her features; and then pointing through an open door to her domestics, who were all employed, seemed to consider that movement as a sufficient answer to the silent appeal of his looks.

De Courcy, grasping her hand, wept on it. She withdrew it gently; and then, exerting to the utmost her own self-possession, and the influence she had over De Courcy, she attempted (and succeeded in her own

conviction, at least in the attempt) to prove to him the necessity of their separation. She pointed out to him the dishonourable nature of their attachment, excluding her to whom his vows were pledged, and the folly of supposing that feelings, partaking of a far different character, could be divested of their nature by being baptised by the name of friendship. As she spoke on this subject, her voice failed her, for she remembered into what illusions she had been led by the feeling her faltering tones tried to condemn;—then she collected her voice, acquired some degree of firmness, and attempted to speak of his future union with Eva, and to suggest some advice that might be ——(her voice failed utterly there,—she recovered it with a determined effort) contributory to his future happiness.

“Inspire your beautiful wife,” said she, “with a taste for literature; it will supply the want of charms, should her’s decline, as they may; it will atone for the want of

“*youth when it withers, as it must.*” And she repeated, with touching elocution, the beautiful Eulogy on Letters, from Cicero *pro Archia.*

De Courcy felt how far he soon must be from hearing such accents for ever. All that miserable day and evening he sat almost at her feet, gasping for, recording in his soul every word she uttered, scarce daring to breathe himself, lest he might lose something he panted to treasure in his heart's core, yea, in his “heart of hearts.”

Towards evening, she had announced that her departure was to take place; as it approached, Zaira became unable to speak, or De Courcy to listen;—they walked through the spacious rooms together in utter silence, but they heard and felt, (and their short shudderings every moment made each other feel) the sound of the servants' feet; the inquiries, the orders, the “note of preparation;” the very knocks at the door with articles ordered from tradesmen, made

them look on each other with an unutterable expression. Those ceased at length, the hurried step of a solitary domestic was all that followed; even that ceased soon; they could hear the melancholy ticking of the clock below; then they heard the beating of each other's hearts, numbering the few moments they were to pass together. What a contrast to their last meeting! and in that very room. Silence, darkness, grief, had succeeded to that brilliant display of genius, talent, and passion, that had illuminated it a few, so few hours before. To each other they appeared like spectres wandering amid the scenes of their former happiness.

Zaira felt some effort necessary for both of them, and she hastened to make it; it was a relief to crush down the single agonizing feeling of her heart, and beat it into fragments, if possible. She attempted to divide and distract her thoughts; she took down some books, and was shocked to find

that the lines wandered before her without distinction ; then she eagerly seized on one whose lines, though she could no longer read them, she remembered well,—it was a volume of Scott's exquisite poetry, which, shortly after De Courcy's first acquaintance with her, he had read to her ; and, as his timid and appealing feeling gradually kindled with her's, she had marked with rose leaves every passage his reading made delightful ; and now, on opening it, she found every page filled with those leaves. The withered flowers fell fast from the pages as she opened them, faded memorials of hours as brilliant as they——Zaira wept.

De Courcy caught the book from her ; “ My life resembled these pages,” said he, “ when you strowed its hours with roses—now”—and he shook the pages, as the dead leaves dropt silently on the carpet—“ Now”—

Zaira could not speak ; she attempted to pass him, for she saw some valuable books in which she had written his name,

and which she hoped to sooth him by offering to him.

As she past on, her shawl swept the strings of her harp; they returned a melancholy, desolate sound. De Courcy caught it, and wildly importuned her "for a last song." She attempted to comply with his wish; sat down, touched her harp with a trembling hand, and struggled to collect voice for some short simple air.

At that moment De Courcy, almost unknowing what he did, opened the book Zaira had just closed, and read in the first page, lines that he himself had written there from Burns.—

"Had we never loved so kindly,
Had we never loved so blindly,
Never met and never parted,
We had ne'er been broken-hearted."

He read these lines aloud; his voice failed at the last line. Zaira was weeping too. He fell at her feet in silent agony; she

struggled in vain to repel him ; a tide of recollections overflowed her heart ; she wept in bitter but luxurious agony. * *

* * * * * The weakness of the moment was over. * * * *

She rose hastily, and pointed out to him the books, the paintings, which she wished him to retain as memorials of her affection. De Courcy scarce raised his head to mark them ; and then, falling back on the sofa, and hiding his face with his hands, tried to choak his audible sobs.

Zaira made a last effort to touch, and to console him ; she had reserved it for the last. She took from a small cabinet her own picture, suspended it from a *black* ribbon, and hung it round his neck.

De Courcy kissed it with melancholy tenderness, and, gazing on it, repeated, " But these lips cannot speak to me."

" What can I give more ?" said Zaira, pale and agitated.

" *Give me yourself !*" exclaimed De Cour-

cy, folding his trembling arms around her as she stood before him.

“Impossible!” said Zaira, gasping for breath to speak; “impossible! you are engaged to another. I could not love you so much, if I ‘did not love your honour more.’”

“I am not engaged. I renounce all engagements, all ties, all objects, but you.—Resign me, and I resign life—perhaps in your presence; but let no vain belief of another object possess your mind—you or the grave must be my choice—do you decide for me.”

* * * *

It would be needless to say how Zaira decided. But neither the ravings of hope or of despair could extort from her a consent to an immediate union. She resolved, even in this exigency of her feelings, to try to develope his character; to enlarge

his mind ; and to fix his heart. She proposed that they should visit the continent as strangers, and, at the end of a year, if his feelings remained unaltered, she——

As he was rapturously hurrying her to the carriage, a letter was put into his hands. He glanced at it, crushed it together, but *put it into his bosom.*

Zaira trembled from head to foot ; it was a female hand ; it was a last farewell from Hya. They hurried to the carriage. The *bag*, the *sybil*, stood on the pavement ; the servants, regarding her as a common mendicant, had not driven her away. She rushed before Zaira, and exclaimed, “ You are going, then, going together ? There is curse on you ; the curse of the earth where ye tread ; the curse of the sea where ye sail ; the curse of the winds and of the waters ; and my curse, bitterest, loudest, last : ” and she fell on her knees on the pavement before them.

The servants soon forced her away. Zaira

was too much agitated from other causes to notice her ; but on De Courcy the perpetual hauntings of this singular being were beginning to make a strong impression. He recollected, that after recognising her at Bray, he mentioned it to Mr Wentworth, and pressed the necessity of having her apprehended, to discover the cause of the extraordinary circumstances under which he had first met Eva.

Mr Wentworth positively declined it, and seemed uneasy at the revival of the circumstance. With Zaira also, this mysterious hag appeared acquainted. Mystery on mystery—under these melancholy auspices their journey to the continent commenced.

CHAPTER VII.

Tears that delight, and sighs that
Waft to heaven——

POPE.

THE day, the eventful day, that De Courcy called on Zaira to take his last leave of her, he felt a wild determination to resign Eva for ever. He felt lost to all happiness ; he disdained to retain any possible share of it, to save a single fragment from the wreck. With a kind of splenetic desperation, he resolved to make a sacrifice of the only means of happiness in his power to that which he never could attain, and show, in this frightful defiance of earthly good, an insensibility to all, but that which his

imagination represented as the first and last, and only one. He wrote, before his visit to Zaira, a line to Eva; his heart was agonized while he wrote it; but that is a wretched apology. The note contained these words: "Eva, I am a wretch; forgive me, if you can; forget me, if you will." There were some other expressions equally incoherent, but nevertheless equally intelligible.

The note came. Eva received—read it—let it fall on her lap—took it up—could not read the lines—gasped for breath in vain—felt a mist spread over her eyes—wished for some one to speak to her, though unable to speak herself; and, finally, sinking into a kind of senseless, horrible rigidity of frame, she retained all her recollection, and rolled about her strained eyes to try if there were any witnesses of her weakness.

The agony was soon over; Mrs Wentworth, who was in the room, saw it, and

rang for the servants,—Eva was removed, and the note dropt from her nerveless hand. Mrs Wentworth caught it up, and read it ; and, in the impulse of a feeling with which her better, her religious feelings for the moment contended in vain, flung it on the ground, and trampled on it—“ Wretch, poor misguided miserable wretch !” she exclaimed ; then, recovering herself, she took it up, asked pardon of the Deity for this short indulgence of her worldly feelings, and tried to force herself to read it. When she had done so several times, she still scarce could compel her honest, pure, and lofty mind to admit the idea of such baseness, such levity, such cruel treachery, as these lines betrayed.

After a long struggle with feelings that were not the less painful from their novelty, for Mrs Wentworth knew little of worldly characters, and nothing of worldly passion, her mind began to flow in its

habitual channel; and frequently she thanked Heaven, that had saved Eva from an union with a being so unworthy of her. She reproached herself, for having been led, by her partiality for her niece, to adopt his cause, or plead in his behalf; trembled at the danger to which Eva had been exposed; and then, as her feelings rapidly fluctuated, she shuddered at the thought, that the heart had been too closely locked to his to bear the blow that severed them without breaking, when that blow was dealt by *his own hand*.

She felt much misery, too, from the apprehended reproaches of her husband; the persecution of Macowen, proud of her misery, because he had predicted it; the persecution of the whole party. All their prophecies were fulfilled—all the means of their querulous sagacity echoed and re-echoed in her ears. "I said so—I knew it—I always was sure it must be so." Those phrases,

which extort a tribute, a miserable tribute to our pride, from the wretchedness we insult, while we pretend to deplore it.

Mrs Wentworth was much distressed; but she had a resource in her distress "that the world knew not of." She retired to pray, and, in laying open her heart to the great Searcher of all, she began to feel that it was a small thing to be judged of man's judgment. The calm she had thus attained she wished to communicate, if possible, to Eva; but she had too much sense to attempt it *too soon*. She left her to herself the remainder of that day; but earnestly lifted up her heart in prayer for this young sufferer—*her heart*; for when her lips moved, the effort was convulsive, her voice was choaked, and the tears rushed into her eyes, long unused to shed them.

The day went off better than she expected; Wentworth came home, but he came alone. Macowen, nor any one else—

no "damn'd good-natured friend," was with him.

Wentworth had heard of De Courcy's leaving Ireland with Madame Dalmatiani; but fortunately he felt so much elated by having the news to tell (as he thought) first to his wife, and next by the ample perspective expanded to his view of opportunities for strictures, lamentations, denunciations, spiritual and temporal, that he was actually in a kind of splenetic good humour. There was a singular contrast between his inward and outward feelings on this occasion; something like the *exoteric* and *esoteric* doctrine of the ancient philosophers, one language for the enlightened, another for the unenlightened. His outward man was like the prophetic scroll, "lamentation, and mourning, and woe." His inward man was all triumph in his own sagacity, and in that of his godly friends, "who had foreseen all;" and in the solemn anticipation of the many breakfasts, dinners, and tea-parties,

where he would eat and drink, and pray, and exhort, and foretell every thing that had happened, and many things that never would happen.

Mrs Wentworth, as soon as she saw him, put De Courcy's letter into his hands, and turned away to conceal the feelings, whose force she struggled with in vain. She wept bitterly, most bitterly, but silently, while Wentworth read the letter. She could not, in the sincerity of her heart, imagine that Wentworth knew it all before; and took the letter merely that he might give a stronger effect to his outset.—It began—Mrs Wentworth was prepared for it: she knew it would be “full of sound and fury, signifying nothing.”—He commenced with the passage from the Epistle to the Corinthians, which he had quoted the day De Courey's inauspicious proposals were made, and they sadly justified the application. Then he went on, unanswered, (and indeed unattended to,) till he came to the

text in St John, which he quoted to prove the cause of De Courcy's apostacy—"They went out from us, because they were not of us." This he repeated with marked emphasis; and it may be presumed, he felt considerable relief from the repetition, as it was continued with the punctuality of minute guns, during the remainder of that day and night, and the greater part of the two following.

During this period, Eva did not appear, nor did Mrs Wentworth intrude on her. The third day she came down, and engaged in domestic occupation, just as usual, but she looked dreadfully pale. Even Wentworth, prepared for angry expostulation under the name of exhortation, was moved by her pale look, and was silent—mercifully silent. Mrs Wentworth tried calmly to engage her in her former habits and pursuits. Not a word was spoken on the subject by uncle, aunt, or niece;

and the family soon returned to their usual quiet course of life.

Almost immediately on the receipt of De Courcy's letter, Eva answered it ; and this answer he received just as he was setting out with Zaira.—It was as follows :—

Letter from EVA to DE COURCY.

“ I answer your letter, because I feel to do so will remove a pressure from my heart, which has almost crushed it since I read your's. You have renounced me then—would you had done so before ! before pain (extreme perhaps,) was mingled with the shame, which even the humblest female must feel at the thought of being rejected. Had I never seen you, I had never been unhappy ; why then is my heart thus torn, when I am about to bid you farewell ?

* I will wipe away a few tears, and then try to tell you why I write to you. I write not to reproach, but to thank you; to bless you—yes, bless you, for having, though at the risk of my life, dissipated an illusion that might have been fatal to my everlasting peace. I tremble yet at the danger into which you alone could have led, and from which you alone could have rescued me. I do not see its extent yet, as I ought to do; but I shall see it, I trust, more clearly and more thankfully every day,—when the oppression of my heart abates.

“ In loving you, (who saved my life, and who appeared to me in a light so dazzling to the imagination and the senses), I was beginning *to love the world*. *Beginning*,—Oh I had more than begun,—I knew not how far I had wandered. The love of the world was stealing on me under the disguise of a conformity to your wishes,—a cultivation of your taste,—the wish to please

you, (which I began to view as a duty,) was only a refinement on the wish to please my own worldly feelings. I already made light of the sobriety of mind, and simplicity of manner, that becomes the disciples of Christ, when put in competition with the hope of pleasing you. I wished for gay attire, for worldly society, for the cultivation of those powers in literature and music, which I heard you praise. I felt a kind of ingratitude to the life from which I had derived so much happiness, and was anxious to diversify its monotony, because it was irksome to you,—so sincere, so simple; so dangerous was my devotion to you. Think of the sacrifice I made of my habits, and feelings, and duties, when I went to the theatre, because you were there. You did not solicit me, it is true; you did not even know I was there; but had I not known you were, what power could ever have brought me within its walls! How far this influence might have extended I know

not ; too far already for my peace here, and perhaps, had I been united to you, too far for my peace hereafter. If I could already make such sacrifices to you, what limit would there have been to them, when inclination assumed the aspect of duty, and all the rebellious feelings of my worldly nature would have pleaded under the names of conjugal virtues ! As a married woman, I would have “cared for the things of the world, that I might please my husband.” There is always a propensity in our hearts to worldly indulgence, and when this is strengthened by the voice and example of him we love, who can resist its seductions ? I should have complied with your taste in dress, in company, in conversation, in habits, in conformity to the world, and still the gaudy carriage “would have borne me once a week to Bethesda Chapel, the ghost of what I was,”—a withered, lifeless professor, clinging to a creed, while I apostatised from practice, “having a form of godliness,

but denying the power thereof." This I would have been, and from this you have snatched me, with a harsh but merciful hand. Let no female, who makes a serious profession of the religion of Christ, ever consent to unite herself with one who does not join her in religious sentiments; *his* conversion is very doubtful, but *her* apostasy is almost certain. The horrible anguish that struck through me like an arrow of fire, (an arrow that no human hand can draw), on reading the lines in which you resign me, brought conviction to my heart. *No human being can, without a crime, suffer so much for another.* I tremble at it yet. The world would tremble if I could express it in words. No such feeling should ever be felt, except for apostasy from God, for desertion of his gospel, for abandonment of our immortal interests. All this I was guilty of, yet, in my misery, I was conscious only of the loss of you. Alas! how much suffering is still before me, in

struggling to regain that path from which I wandered for you, and to which, though you led me from it, you cannot lead me back ! I feel like one, who, misled by a false guide, sees the torch extinguished when it was burning brightest, and has to feel her way back in darkness and alone. Oh ! how many floods of tears, what agonies of prayer, what self-humiliation, what self-reproach are before me (and all how merited,) before I regain the path I have lost ! The shades of paradise no longer can shelter me ; I hear the voice of God walking in the shades of the evening, and tremble at his summons. Alas ! will he accept a heart that a mortal has rejected—doubt and darkness are on me now. I sometimes question whether I ever knew the truth as it is in Jesus, or walked with God in spirit and in truth ; such is the consequence of falling from God. I mistrust my own sincerity, I even doubt that I ever was sincere ; how can I rely on a heart that deceived me on

its first temptation? My very wanderings seem to me more real than my wish to return, and I feel as if my repentance were hypocrisy.

“ It is useless to describe to you feelings which you cannot enter into; if you could, I should have suffered less. Religion never could have betrayed me to the misery that passion has. It is very cruel of men to attach themselves to religious females, without any participation in the sentiments which they deprive them of, and leave them only wretchedness in exchange. The world, deprived of the only charm it possessed in the eyes of their victims, can give them no comfort, and the anchor of futurity trembles in their grasp.

“ Alas! it would not have been thus with your beautiful Italian; her charms and her genius, the homage to which she is accustomed, the world in which she lives, moves, and has her being, must for ever prevent her giving herself up to an exclusive senti-

ment, or an individual object. If you deserted her this night, how many resources would she still have?—*But I have none.* Could she resign the world for you, would not the world console her for your absence? But you were the world to me. You were very wrong in thinking that the simplicity of my habits and character, and the coldness of my manners, were indications of a want of feeling; they were not. Perhaps women of such a character cannot embellish the triumphs of passion, but they can agonise in its defeat; they are formed rather to suffer than to enjoy, and it is you who have fixed my destiny for the former.

* * * *

“ Do not imagine for a moment that these lines are written with a hope, with an intention of *recalling* you.—Oh no! I have suffered too much—If you were at my feet

this moment, I *could not* spurn you, but I *would not* raise you—

* * * *

“ Still less think of what I cannot name—that the hand you have resigned will ever be given to another. Oh no ! I feel even in injustice, you cannot be so unjust ; in desertion, you cannot be so cruel—you cannot—but I have done. Believe me there is no sacrifice in this—it costs us little to make a resolution, which we know we have not long to keep. Every line that I write, a voice seems to call to me, “ Bid him farewell, and return to your God.” I will try to obey it. Oh how strong the contrast between us at present ! I am about to return to the existence you thought so gloomy and monotonous, and which even *I* feel so now. I shall be present at sermons, of which I hear not a word ; sing hymns,

without knowing the words I sing, or feeling their meaning; listen to the conversation of religious people, without knowing what they say; still struggling, as if through a dream, to recover a sense of the reality of my situation. Oh, the ways of religion are weary when we have lost its spirit! Such is the life before me—It may please God that a ray of light will break in upon the gloom in which I am plunged. Perhaps it may be deigned to me, when I am engaged in prayer *for you*. How different, in the eyes of the world, is your destiny from mine!—you go to all that the world calls felicity—intellectual luxury, and mutual passion, in a lovely climate, and amid “troops of friends,” while I am left to die in solitude; yet I am happier than you, for I have injured no one—no cry of a broken heart is ringing in my ears.

“I remember a story you once told me, of a king, who, making his escape with his son across a piece of water from his ene-

mies, had his boat overturned. The son cried to his father to save him ; the father saved himself—but never forgave himself—and at the moment of his death, continued to repeat in agony, “ Father, save me ! ” The words of his dying son—words which had never ceased to ring in his ears, which rung in them still even then. May my last words never echo thus in your ears ; yet if you should hear them, they will be lifting your name to Heaven.

* * * *

“ Even thus I have one consolation—it was you who deserted me. I think my heart must have broke before I could have resigned you.

* * * *

“ I am now writing in a room in which you have been so often.—I look at every object which recalls your image, without

having the power of recalling yourself. I feel an agony, which even *you* would pity me for. The books which you gave me, and which I arranged so as to meet your eye; the flowers which I collected, because you loved them; the harp which I placed in sight, to remind you that *I, too*, hoped to sing for you—all these objects are around me, and I do not think that a sword thrust into my heart could give me more actual pain than their simple sight. What pleasure they gave me once, when I entered this room only to pray! This pain, however, must soon abate. I know it must, from its horrible force—it will grow milder, or it will be less-felt, as my strength gradually declines.

* * * *

“I had accustomed myself to watch your knocks at the door; *latterly* they were very infrequent, and then I watched them closer. They made an era in my day; now when I

hear a knock, my heart beats still, but it is only from habit, and habit (or any thing else) cannot make it beat much longer.

* * * *

“ You will return in spring ; in spring, you will be back with your triumphant beautiful bride : perhaps you will visit this room from some lingering feeling ; you will see the flowers, the books, the music, you once loved, all in their place, where you formerly wished to see them ; and perhaps you will ask, where am *I*.—“ I came,” says the eastern tale you told me, “ to the tombs of my friends, and asked where are they ? and echo answered, *Where ?*”—

EVA.

END OF VOLUME SECOND.

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WOMEN;

OR,

POUR ET CONTRE.

CHAPTER I.

O primavera gioventu' dell' anno
Bella madre di fiori
D'erbe novelle, e di novelli amori.

THE lovers were on their way to France, after which they purposed visiting Italy. What brilliant prospects before them!—Youth, passion, genius, affluence,—every felicity of life seemed mingled in the cup that was held to their lips, and no two intoxicated revellers at life's short banquet ever sat down more determined to quaff the poison, and believe it nectar.

All was soon arranged between them ; Zaira, whose principles were unshaken and uncorrupted, amid the indulgence o her strongest feelings, opposed an invincible barrier to the impetuosity of De Courcy. Not all his importunities could prevail on her to consent to an immediate marriage. She had fears (taught by her former sufferings) amid all her hopes and her present felicity. She wished to develope his character, to mature his intellects, to fix his feelings, before she could intrust her happiness to them. She succeeded in convincing him, or at least persuading him, it would be best to pass a year on the continent as strangers and travellers, to enlarge their minds with observations on existing life, and enrich their imaginations with the recollection of antiquity ; and at the end of that period, if ——— “ *If*,” repeated De Courcy, pressing her hand to his lips ; and she was silent from conviction and delight.

The state of the continent was favour-

able for the first time for more than twenty years to their plans and their hopes. Peace, peace every where. No prisons, no passports, no fears; the family of mankind wandered about the world at large. Kingdoms appeared like different apartments in the same mansion, and the allied sovereigns went visiting about like country gentlemen calling at each other's seats.

Zaira's affairs required they should first visit England; they did, and as soon as they could, went to France; and, during their whole progress, the plan which Zaira had internally laid down was resolutely pursued. Curiosity itself must have perished for want of food in watching them. They travelled like brother and sister, only with rather less proximity than is allowed to relations so near. They never sat in the same carriage; they never rested in the same house; they never met but at meals like other travellers. It must be owned, that had Zaira been studying for artificial

influence over the desultory, fluctuating mind of De Courcy, she could not have unintentionally adopted a better expedient. The restraint produced perpetual novelty, and perpetual novelty was necessary for him.

It was during her short stay in England that Zaira wrote to Madame St Maur on the subject of her present hopes and feelings. Part of her letter was employed in deprecating Madame St Maur's astonishment at her having selected an Irishman for the partner of her life, after seeing the continent at her feet, and seeing it without emotion. In another part she says,—“ I know I shall appear eccentric to the world in the formation of my plan of happiness; but perhaps every human being, however limited in intellect, makes their happiness dependent on their imagination. I cannot understand why the intellectual intercourse between men and women should be limited as it always is, annihilated as it often is,

by the prejudices of society, arising from subjects that have nothing in common with intellectual cultivation.

“ The connection between men and women is always supposed to include marriage or crime. Has mental union no tie, no bond independent of either ? Is it not possible to devote one’s self to intellectual enjoyment exclusively, and to enjoy it in the presence of the object that partakes of it, in his *continued presence*, without an appeal to the laws to secure it, whose interference would probably banish it for ever.

“ I covet neither to be the wife or the mistress of the man I love ; I seek to enjoy that intellectual existence, of which I can better comprehend the felicity than of the agitations of passion. I would wish to traverse the world with him, to see all that life could shew, and recollection supply ; to pass from the splendours of Paris to the ruins of Rome ; to smile on him in festivity, and to muse with him in solitude ; to

talk of the wonders of the days of old, amid the architectural desert of Tadmor or Persepolis ; or enjoy the felicities of modern refinement amid the scavans of enlightened Europe ; to blend all the charms of the arts with all the resources of literature ; to touch my harp for him where Horace tuned his lyre, and read with him the poetry of Virgil, while reclining on his tomb ; to blend in one delicious draught all that nature, genius, antiquity, and society can offer, and drink with him the *amreeta cup of immortality*, that unites human existence to the divine by the only power they have in common, the power of mind. Why should such an union as this be fettered by the prejudices of society ? The ties of interest, of caprice, of physical passion, which society is hourly forming and sanctioning, are criminal, compared to this.

“ *Society demands too much for what it gives* : It may have a right to controul our manners, but when it presumes to interfere

with our happiness, we disdain the "little brief authority" which would tyrannize over what must ever be exempt from its jurisdiction."

Zaira pursues this subject for a considerable time, and at length ends with these words:—"I feel, Delphine, you do not understand me."

Madame St Maur's answer came soon. She was greatly shocked when she heard the step Zaira had taken.

"Not understand you, my charming Zaira! I ask ten thousand pardons, but you really remind me of Madame du Terrasson, the most frivolous woman in all Paris, (and that is saying a great deal) who is perpetually telling her friends they cannot penetrate a character so profound as her's. I really never found the least difficulty in understanding a person who understood themselves. I see exactly your situation; and the more eloquence and sentiment you waste in hiding it from yourself, the more

you betray it to me. It is a bad ~~omen~~ your attacking the present state of society. No woman ever inveighed against society, but with the hopes of making it worse. The world is a very good world, (if there were not so many taxes), and when I leave it, I never expect to see a better ; but that may be my humility.

“ The truth is, you are in love with a beautiful youth, whom nature has made an Adonis, and whom you would fain make an Apollo. Now this is a very common occurrence, and you are angry because it is so. You wish to make it something uncommon ; and to do so, you only require to unhinge the entire frame of society, and to wander over the world in a fit of platonism run mad. We are amazingly fond of imagining ourselves in situations in which human beings never before were placed, and to conceive that these situations must suggest and justify new and unprecedented measures in our own conduct, when, in

fact, we are just in the same circumstances that our mothers and grandmothers, and so on up to Eve, were in before us."

[Here Madame St Maur makes a digression about a Kashmeer shawl, that her lover, M. de Viosmenil, had just presented her with; and declares she is so intoxicated by this homage, and the perfume of the superb shawl, that she is unable for some time to proceed. At length she goes on.]

"If I understand your future plan, it is in fact to educate a husband for yourself. Now, granting what is beyond all latitude even of hypothesis, that an Irishman was the properest person to select for this singular experiment; that this melange of love and literature should happen to hit his fancy as well as your's; that he should wander all over the continent with you *in all the constancy of nineteen*, without ever wishing to sacrifice at the shrine of another French grace, or Italian muse; and that you wandered with him, without the least

compromise of your character, nominal or real, (and I hardly know which is worse)—granting all this, and that you played this desperate game with the utmost dexterity and success, what would you gain by it? Misery for life—absolute misery. Your success must leave on his mind a decided impression of your intellectual superiority, the very last impression a woman should leave on the mind of a man whom she wished to love her. Of all superiority, it is that of which men are most jealous, because it is the only one of which they are in any danger. Physical force they have all to themselves, (ever since the times of the Amazons at least); and the advantages of nature are of so precarious and inferior a character, as not to form a subject of competition.

“None but a fop, a Dandi, would envy his wife’s beauty; and none but a fool would undervalue her wealth or consequence, because he can make his own advantage of

them. But of what use are a woman's genius and talents, except to impress her husband every moment of his humiliated existence, with a sense of his own inferiority? Never tell me of Le Fevre and Madame Dacier, a pair of pedants. I am sure they were squabbling eternally, and threw Homer and Horace at each other's heads, literally or metaphorically, every moment of their lives.

“Voltaire and Madame du Chatelet did much better. They contented themselves with mangling poor Newton between them, and satisfied with this amusement, never thought of marrying at all. Besides, these people had only learning; you are a genius, Zaira; and genius, (which I venerate from my soul, and think superior to every thing under heaven, except common sense) makes a woman a charming mistress, but the devil of a wife.

“I know, my charming Zaira, that you unite with genius a mixture of enthusiasm

and mildness, that woman, till you, never possessed ; woman (admired as you) certainly never exhibited before. But it does not signify ; man will and must be superior. They may twine the chains in which they bind us with the brilliant flowers of chivalric courtesy, or impassioned devotion ; but still they are chains. Our best attitude in wearing them is that of a graceful but conscious submission, and we never conquer effectually, but in appearing to be slaves. Take my advice, beautiful Zaira ! dazzle on the theatre ; charm in crowds ; come to Paris ; be the first

——— ‘ to lead the regal ball,
Adored by thousands, and admired by all ;’

but give up all idea of being *la bonne mere du famille* ; it will never do.—What colour are De Courcy’s eyes ?”

In a long postscript, Madame St Maur

tells Zaira of the incomparable dancing of the Emperor of Russia at the Parisian balls, and her regrets that he was so soon to go to London—*her* regrets. However, she believed she had excited some sensation, and had had some success during his stay in Paris.

Zaira could well discriminate the plain good sense, the worldly knowledge of *les convenances du société*, and the Parisian levity, that entered into the composition of this letter. She was amused by the levity, revolted by the worldliness, and not convinced by the good sense.

De Courcy and Zaira were now on their way to Paris.

CHAPTER II.

Il n'est guère plaisant d'être empoisonnée même par l'esprit de rose.

THE day after she wrote her letter, Madame St Maur was obliged to quit Paris to attend the event of a suit pending against her in Languedoc, where the greater part of her property lay. Her affection, her strong affection, struggled and survived amid the claims of her own interest; and before she quitted Paris, she implored M. de Viosmenil, her lover, a man of sense, and knowledge of the world, (which are common), and of feeling, (which is uncommon, at least in alliance with the other qua-

lities), to be *present* with Zaira, and watch her with all the vigilance of friendship.

M. de Viosmenil undertook the task just as Zaira and De Courcy arrived in Paris.

It was an interesting, almost an awful period when they arrived. Paris, in May 1814, was, what no one now need be told, the metropolis of all Europe; all mankind were hurrying there, and astonished to find themselves there. The plunder of all Europe; the wonders of antiquity; the *chef-d'œuvres* of modern imitation; all that Herculaneum could be disembowelled of; all that could be gleaned from Thebais or Alexandria; all that could be swept away from modern palaces, from Milan to Moscow, from Berlin to Vienna; all the riches of that dreadful harvest, that had been reaped in blood from one end of the earth to the other, were accumulated there. The spoiler was gone, but the spoil was yet there; and there were living wonders enough to satiate the eye, and fill the soul, had the streets been

grass-grown, and the buildings bevels. There were emperors, and kings, and heroes—names that one wonders at in gazettes, were spoken of as familiarly by the populace of Paris, “as maids of thirteen do of puppy-dogs.”—All the embodied genius, energy, patriotism, and military skill, which had conducted those tremendous operations, which had been approximating each other since the battle of Leipsic, and had now united them in a common centre of combined and interminable hostility—one could not walk the streets without jostling against a sovereign, a general, a hero—Paris seemed like the city of the gods.

Charles believed himself breathing empyreal air; he felt the military mania (though its force was now spent) in all its first intoxicating inspiration. What would he have given to have been crossing the Pyrenees with Wellington, or the Rhine with the allies! How contemptible his past existence appeared to him, whether

passed in the conventicle with Eva, or in the boudoir with Zaira!—Equally contemptible. Europe had been won and lost, and he had not struck a blow for her safety, or her ruin!—Yes, even the latter alternative appeared at the moment less shameful. He forgave (in his own behalf) Solon for making the law which declared it criminal to be neutral in civil war.

All this passed rapidly through his mind as he stood on the inspiring heights of Montmartre; he descended, entered Paris, passed the two following days in traversing it, and forgot every thing, but that it was the centre of every luxury which the imagination or the senses, in their most ambitious and unbounded revelry, could demand or enjoy.

It was a mad step of Zaira to bring him to Paris first. She should have taken him to the banks of the Tiber rather than the banks of the Seine. Amid the awful solitudes of antiquity, his mind might have

acquired that decided taste for literature and reflection which she wished to inspire. Paris could give literature enough to be sure; but was Paris the place to inspire reflection? It was a desperate step. Paris had too many charms for De Courcy, and De Courcy had charms too for Paris. There is a high value set on mere physical qualities by a nation almost proverbially destitute of them. The Apollo Belvidere seemed to have arrived at Paris only to harbinge De Courcy. His beauty; his towering stature; the softness of his manners; the result of his timidity taken for the quality itself; and his enthusiasm, so like genius, as to have deceived even Zaira, were a brilliant security for his success in Parisian society, introduced as he was. Eager as he set out for all and every species of information and improvement, "jealous" of literary "honour," he soon began to find that Paris could afford

more than intellectual pleasures, and that there were more things in it than Zaira's philosophy dreamt of.

It was just at this period that M. de Viosmenil, at Madame St Maur's entreaty, entered on his invidious, suspicious, painful office of Providor of Zaira's happiness. His first bulletin, issued in consequence of his new office, runs in these words—alarming words.

M. DE VIOSMENIL'S *Letter*.

“ Well—my beloved Delphine, I have seen your friends ; your friend rather I should say, for you have not yet seen M. de Courcy. I have seen him, and have half-forgiven Zaira. I have studied him, and trembled for her. He is the most perfect human form I ever beheld ; nothing like him has ever trod the earth ; and the gentleness of his manners makes a contrast

almost ludicrous with his gigantic stature and commanding presence. His manners are singular, a mixture of diffidence and enthusiasm altogether incredible, totally ~~un~~-Parisian—destitute of *our inimitable ease*, and borrowing their chiefest charm from that destitution. This stranger enslaves us, by fighting with weapons unknown to us before. He blushes like a girl, frolics like a boy, talks like a man, and looks like a hero. He is a man, in the language of that inimitable poet you taught me to read—

“ Who could win woman’s heart, ruin and leave her.”

“ Believe me it is this class of men, so seductive from their softness, who are the destruction of women; that very gentleness and flexibility that lends its dangerous charm to their manners, extends its influence to their character, and the idol of

yesterday is trod into dust, while they rush to offer their worship to the deity of to-morrow over the fragments.

“ I think Zaira is lost—lost—Her character is not yet compromised, but her peace must be gone. I do not rest my conclusion on abstract reasoning, nothing could be more absurd ; for the wanderings of the human mind, when indulged, defy and defeat all reasoning founded on their operations.

“ I speak of facts only—facts that I have witnessed. Yesterday I met them at a party at our friend ——’s. The circle was brilliant, and Zaira was unusually eloquent in literature. At the end of a striking sentence which had called forth loud applauses from her auditors, she looked round with a flush of triumph in her lovely countenance for De Courey. She saw him engaged, not in conversation, but in delighted listening attention to the beautiful Eulalie de Touranges. He was bend-

ing over her chair in silence. I marked the change in her countenance, in her voice; the subsiding of her whole figure; the gloomy vacancy of disappointment in her expression. Her hearers did not notice it; they pressed her with some new remarks. She attempted to answer, but evidently did not understand them; struggled to recover her composure, and went on, obviously not knowing of what she was speaking. Music was proposed soon after; and apparently determined to force De Courcy to feel an interest in what she was undertaking, she asked him what she should sing. He appeared not pleased at the publicity which this application gave him, and returned some slight answer, referring her to her own choice. She sat down. I could hear her sigh. She turned languidly over the leaves of her music-book, and sung an air *sotto voce* with a tone, a look, a manner unlike,—oh, how unlike Zaira! At the

close of the air, she turned her head almost imperceptibly, and saw De Courcy arranging the men on a chess-board with Mademoiselle de Touranges. The last notes of the air were nearly unintelligible. If Zaira goes on this way, she is ruined. She is too dazzling, too exigeante, too anxious to make every moment pass in a paroxysm of delight. Pleasure itself so protracted, so exaggerated, must become pain. It is like the punishment said to be inflicted on Regulus, cutting off the eyelids to turn the light of the sun into torture. Men sooner forgive women for pleasing even too little than too much ; for we pay ourselves the compliment of believing, that the failure of the former arises from our not having taken the trouble of drawing them out, that they might be charming if we pleased to make them so ; but women, who show their powers of pleasing to be independent of us, cannot wonder if we leave them to the enjoyment they can procure for themselves. If Zaira

had common sense (a faculty amazingly scarce,) she would feel her own advantage in suffering him to converse with other women as much as possible ; for what woman would not suffer by a comparison with her, if Zaira gives him time to make it ? I pity her. When a woman once suffers the display of her talents to depend on her feelings, and suffers the look, the whisper, the conscious presence of an individual, to influence her more than the homage of crowds, she becomes wretched ; for, alas ! it is much easier to obtain the bravos of a crowd, than the applause of an individual.

“ I shall observe them, however, more closely, with all the vigilance that my devotion to you inspires.

“ DE VIOSMENIL.”

The next day M. de Viosmenil called on Zaira ; he found matters a little worse. She was waiting with repressed but visible wretchedness of impatience for De Courcy. He had promised to attend her to a lecture

of the Abbé Sicard's, and he had gone to visit what was once the Bois de Boulogne, and hear the exclamation of his Parisian Ciceroni against "les coquins Prussiens, et les vilains Cosacks."* Company arrived; Zaira forced herself to converse; it was but force. She accompanied them to the lecture, was absent and uninterested. The rest viewed her with wonder; De Viosmenil, who knew the secret, with deep and painful interest, and he talked, more than any Frenchman ever talked, for two hours, to withdraw the attention of the party from her.

Zaira was at a splendid ball that evening; she had been introduced in the course of it to some distinguished personages; she had been requested to sing by a sovereign; her ambition seemed a little to revive, and a smile once more was diffused over her beautiful features; but De Viosmenil, who

* Anachronism. *Transeat cum cæteris.*

marked her frequent abstraction, her glances for ever reverting to the door, the stifled sigh of disappointment, and the forced gaiety of her renewed conversation, felt and understood what was the hope that caused this partial excitement, and how little that hope was likely to be verified.

At length she could struggle no longer ; she retired gradually from the circle that had gathered round her ; and in the most brilliant society in Paris, Zaira was sitting in a remote corner almost alone, and utterly neglected, except by M. de Viosmenil, when (among a group that entered the room) she recognized De Courcy—started from her seat—uttered almost a scream of joy ; then restraining herself, sat down, but turned such a look of eager, confidential pleasure on De Viosmenil, that he could not help grasping her hand as a token of intuitive recognition of her feelings.

De Courcy approached ; he seemed anxious to make his way to Zaira ; it was easily made ; he advanced and uttered

some inarticulate expressions of apology.—The tone was enough for Zaira; her countenance was radiant with smiles as he approached; but when he appeared anxious to sooth her feelings for his involuntary neglect, tears, which she could not repress, started into her eyes.

Dé Courcy, shocked and distressed, and (dare we say it) incensed, retired. He could not bear (what man with insular feelings could bear) being made so conspicuous as the cause of Zaira's tears.

De Viosmenil, in spite of all his knowledge of life, and all his Parisian experience of the characters of women, turned away in astonishment.—“Good God! is this possible?”—so deep, so desperate an infatuation appeared to him without precedent.

Whether the company took a favourable omen from the renewed radiance of Zaira's countenance on De Courcy's entrance, or from some other cause, they surrounded her with importunities for a song; first-

rate accompaniment was ready, was impatient; far, far different from the puny aid of the musicians she had been accompanied by often in De Courcy's hearing in Dublin. Supported by his presence, her performance was equal to all her former excellence and fame.

The dancing was then about to be renewed, when *the illustrious personage* before mentioned expressed a wish for another air.

De Courcy was just then solicited to join in a quadrille. Zaira, however, took an opportunity of saying to him, with brief eagerness, "I am pressed to sing again by —; Do you wish I should?" and she remembered the time when the bare mention of such a hope would have illuminated his whole evening. How soon a woman loses her power when she loses her heart! De Courcy, who was really anxious to dance, replied coldly, "Yes, surely, if you wish it." If *she wished it!* Alas, when it comes

to this reference to wishes, it is a sign that we have lost that intuitive sense of each other's feelings which is understood without questions, and expressed without conditions. When we really love, we decide for each other without hesitation, for we feel that we have but one heart. Zaira hurried through her song, and in a few moments De Courcy was engaged in a quadrille with Eulalie de Touranges.

The next day, De Courcy, who felt really anxious for intellectual eminence, met some literary men at Zaira's, and the morning would have been delightful, but for a constant kind of tacit reference to him as Zaira's favourite,—a kind of watching for his opinions and sentiments as an implied homage to Zaira's, that abashed and embarrassed De Courcy. He did not wish their identity of sentiment to be thus publicly recognised. What man wishes to have his whole intellectual stock supposed to be the borrowed property of a female mind?—

There was a dinner-party at De Viosme nil's, and Eulalie de Touranges was there, more beautiful than ever. She was eminently handsome, though not in the usual style of French beauty, and there was a softness and diffidence in her manner, which, though only the veil to consummate coldness of heart, and levity of character, struck De Courcy as a grateful contrast to the glare, the ambition, the admitted pre-eminence of Zaira. At all events, no man is long without a reason to justify his gratitude to a woman who distinguishes him by her preference.

The company, after dinner, amused themselves in composing epitaphs for Buonaparte in his retreat at Elba. They then passed on to epitaphs in general, and De Courcy was astonished at the latitude allowed in Parisian conversation, when he heard the punning Latin epitaph translated into bad, indecent French, and the *occasion related*.

Habe mortem præ oculis,

L'Abbe mort en prez au cul lis.

The beautiful Enlalie looked down. De Viosmenil, whose quick eye caught and comprehended the cause of De Courcy's embarrassment; turned the conversation to a subject which he thought must obliterate the traces of the last. He had been in England, and he spoke of English epitaphs; and he repeated, in good English, that beautiful one on the *only* daughter of Sir Brooke Boothby,—“The unhappy parents ventured their whole freight of happiness in this frail bark, and the wreck was total.”

The hearers applauded, and Zaira, raising her eyes, filled with tears, fixed them on De Courcy with a peculiar expression.

De Courcy did not observe her; he had lost that *sixth sense of love*, by which we feel that the eyes of those who love us are fixed on us, as distinctly as we hear their voices when addressed to us. De Viosmenil saw it, and felt for her at the bottom of his heart; he saw the bark was frail, and he dreaded the wreck would be total.

At the other end of the table, a M. De Cardonneau, one of those atheistical philosophising sciolists, (the pest of Parisian society,) had been quoting, with an air of sentimental profundity, the well-known sentence of a French writer,—“ It is impossible to determine which are most to blame, those who cease to please, or those who cease to be pleased.” Eulalie, in the softest tones of her soft voice, declared she thought nothing could be more easily determined, though she forbore to decide which. Instantly her opinion was espoused by one-half of the company, and opposed by the other, and a conflict commenced so vehement, so agitated, so sustained with all powers of heart, soul, and voice, but all within the bounds of French politeness, that one would have imagined some question relating to the everlasting salvation of the company was at stake. It was indeed to them a question of much more importance, for it related to the glory of a popular author.

The debate ran so high, that De Viosmenil, who possessed some taste for English quietness in conversation, proposed putting it to the vote. Zaira determined *against those who cease to please*, and De Courcy *against those who cease to be pleased*; and this hypocrisy of mutual politeness, by which each tried to avoid wounding the other, and expressed sentiments just opposite to their own, settled the matter with De Viosmenil. Some of the party went in the evening to the Theatre Française. De Courcy went with them; and on his return to a *petit souper* where most of them were re-assembled, De Courcy was eagerly interrogated on a subject always near and dear to Parisian hearts—their theatre, their Talma, their actresses—Mademoiselle Duchesnois or Mademoiselle George, for life and death—which? Eulalie, with her delicious suppressed voice, spoke with graceful rapture of Mademoiselle George—“*Sa belle taille—sa beauté éclatante—ah, il me*

semble, qu'elle est la divinité du théâtre—
Mademoiselle George !”

There appeared to De Courcy something generous in this praise of personal beauty, which the company in a moment referred by their eyes to Zaira ; and he felt no less delighted than amazed by this tacit homage to the superior beauty of Zaira, in a female who possessed so large a share of it herself. Unacquainted himself with the peculiarities of the French stage, and struck rather by the physical than dramatic powers of the performers, he decided readily in favour of the superior grace and majesty of Mademoiselle George. He had not heard Zaira's testimony of the far superior powers of Mademoiselle Duchesnois. Eulalie, proud of his suffrage in favour of her favourite, carried all before her in her own small circle ; and, elated by her success, ventured far out of her depth, and risked a few vapid superficial remarks on Racine and Shakespeare. Foolish and

presumptuous, she knew as little of Shakespeare as Frenchwomen usually do; and as little did she know before whom she ventured her rash, crude criticisms. Zaira had sat silent and abstracted, taking little notice, and less share in the conversation; since she heard De Courcy's preference of Mademoiselle George, while her own of Mademoiselle Duchesnois was unnoticed. How little pleasure she felt *then* in the looks of the company, who had referred to her all the homage bestowed on the beauty of Mademoiselle George! She now saw De Courcy, as she thought, bending in delighted attention to Eulalie's feeble observations. He was, in fact, bending forward to conceal his shame of their weakness, while he still flattered her by the appearance of attention.

Zaira tried to collect herself. She believed, vainly believed, that this was a trial of mind, and that she could in a moment silence the "puny battle" of her antagonist.

She entered into the conversation ; she felt, or imagined, she had been too silent, too abstracted—that her intellectual superiority would at once fix De Courcy. She trembled to think that she might lose him by suffering a momentary declension of those mental powers which had won him once, and which might win him still. She spoke—she opened the vast volumes of her mind, enriched with intellectual treasures “ passing that of women ;” she displayed all her powers—all her eloquence—all her literature ; she exhausted antiquity—traversed the wide domain of modern knowledge with the step of a queen who came to receive its homage and collect its tributes, and returned with its ample stores, to lay them, as she hoped, not at the shrine of public applause, but at the feet of him she loved. The circle applauded—loudly applauded ; Eulalie was silent—timidly silent.

Zaira, whose eye was traversing the

groupe with the pride she had once felt, and the mingled apprehension which she now began to feel, rested it on De Courcy. That ark was of more value to her than the world she had encircled, and found a waste. *His* eyes were fixed on Eulalie with an expression of sympathy, of commiseration, so sincere, so tender, so respectful, that Zaira would gratefully have exchanged her triumph for a share in that glance so pitying, though so humiliating.

Thus the distinction of sexes is preserved even in minds ; a woman must always be the object of protection ; and all Zaira's intellectual superiority was at that moment a sacrifice to the weakness of her rival,

CHAPTER III.

Εἰργασθε δ' ἔξ ὑπάρη θύη δὲ μὴ ἀμφοτέρωτ' ἄμφοι.

HOMER.

DE COURCY carried away at least one salutary impression from the preceding evening. He felt his intellectual taste revive; he was ashamed any longer, in the centre of Paris, to waste his days in sights and his nights at the theatres. He resolved to shut himself up and study their literature; for he felt that, in the society that surrounded Zaira, there was a perpetual demand for it, and that the Parisians, though not intellectual, are always literary. He kept his resolution for two days, (as long as resolutions of that kind are usually kept,) and was then tempted out to

hear a lecture of the Abbé Sicard. The lecture was very long, but De Courcy's attention never remitted; the sparkling intelligence and varying expression of his features struck the Abbé, contrasted with the usual immobility of English countenances, and he was flattered by an attention more profound than the generality of his countrymen could bring themselves to pay. He spoke of him after the lecture with all the enthusiasm of gratitude, and exerted himself so effectually in his favour, that in a few days De Courcy found himself in a circle more retired,—more exclusive certainly, but far more intellectual than he had yet met in Paris. Among them was a M. d'Orbessan, a man of whom De Courcy felt disposed to reverse the French sentence, and admit "he was not English, but well deserved to be so." His candour, humility, strict morals, and unobtruded literature, were a rarity in a metropolis—the greatest of all in Paris. He was preparing a trans-

lation of Shakespeare, and sometimes condescended to shew De Courcy passages of his work. He was in no danger of abusing his original with the petulant and jealous impotence of Voltaire, or of falling into the errors of those translators who render "pale and woe-begone!"—*pale, et douleur aller vous-en*,—and "Still, slavery, thou art a bitter draught"—*tranquille esclavage*, &c. and brogue (the Irish accent) "*sabot*." But still he was ignorant of many colloquial peculiarities and idiomatic niceties of the language, and gratefully accepted the respectful assistance of De Courcy.

One day that the latter dined with M. d'Orbessan and a number of literary men, the conversation turned on English poetry. De Courcy was amazed at the ignorance they betrayed, and hurt to find it was the ignorance of pride; they appeared to know we had a Shakespeare, of whom one of them quoted Voltaire's acknowledgment of the few pearls he had found on his enormous dunghill, (which De Courcy answer-

ed in the well-known words of Mrs. Montague, "*C'est un fumier qui a fertilisé une terre bien ingrate*") ; and they spoke of Young's Night Thoughts with an enthusiasm that astonished De Courcy. But they appeared actually ignorant that England could boast of a modern poet ; and when De Courcy repeated the names of Byron, Scott, Moore, Wilson, Wordsworth, Southey, &c. it sounded to them like Alcandrumque, Haliumque, Noemonaque, Prytanimque. De Courcy then recited passages from their works, with which he was well acquainted ; and, in the ardour of the moment, risked a French translation. This, though imperfect and inadequate, as extempore translation must be, charmed the hearts of his French auditors in a moment. His fluency delighted them, and his command of their language raised him in a moment far higher in their estimation than the most profound acquaintance, the most exquisite sensibility of the literary

treasures of his own. There was a mixture of animation and diffidence in his delivery that enchanted them; it seemed as if he was asking pardon of their language for the liberty he took in making it the vehicle of English poetry. M. d'Orbessan, in particular, was delighted by the display of talents he had always divined and appreciated; and, after looking at De Courcy for some moments, he exclaimed with emotion, "Ah, mon Dieu, quelle pitie!"

"Pity!" the word struck on De Courcy's ears; how had he rendered himself an object of pity? He blushed, and wondered why he blushed; attempted to speak to M. d'Orbessan, and felt he knew not what to say; at length he articulated, "He knew not how he had merited the honour of M. d'Orbessan's pity."

M. d'Orbessan bowed, executed an indescribable French shrug, took snuff repeatedly, and the conversation gradually was renewed.

The next day, De Courcy took an early opportunity of questioning him on the subject of his exclamation the preceding evening. The good-natured, warm-hearted Frenchman viewed him with a look of infinite compassion. "Monsieur will then pardon the liberty a stranger takes in feeling an infinite interest for him."

"Pardon, M. d'Orbessan! I am grateful—honoured by the interest you feel for me—permit me to prove how grateful."

"Then, Monsieur, is it not a pity that a young man, who might distinguish himself in society a thousand ways, should choose to achieve distinction by being announced to all dissipated Paris as the favourite of an actress?"

"The favourite of an actress!" repeated De Courcy in horror, as the meaning of these words indistinctly opened on him.

"Your ingenuous blushes refute a thousand calumnies in a moment," said d'Orbessan; "but will you then permit me to

ask on what terms you are with Madame Dalmatiani ?”

“ Terms with Madame Dalmatiani !” repeated de Courcy, gasping with feelings he could not utter. “ What terms ? we are friends.”

The Frenchman looked first incredulous, and then commiserating,—“ Friends !—that friendship must be pure indeed, which subsists between a young man of nineteen and a beautiful female, without a construction far different from what, doubtless, their own purity justifies, and would merit. Madame Dalmatiani is beautiful, unmarried (*at present* ;) you, sir, are young and interesting—you are always together, though neither united by blood or marriage.”

“ Stop, sir,” said De Courcy ; “ you have said Madame Dalmatiani is unmarried at present. What is your meaning ? or have you a meaning ?”

“ I mean,” said d’Orbessan, “ simply, that

Madame Dahmatiani was married before ; —that she had a child,—and that no one knows what is become of her husband or her child.”

At these words De Courcy rushed from the house in a species of fury and despair. He felt what he could not describe—a sense of imposition, of indignity incredible, intolerable. He—a gentleman, a man of birth and blood, well-descended, well-educated, of pretensions that would justify his addresses to the first females in his own country, (whom after all he began to think the best,) and to appear abroad as the minion of an actress—on the Catharine of Russia system—loathsome, degrading, disgusting—and she was married before, and had a child, and no one knew any thing of her husband and child. Neither had ever been mentioned to him. And was he to be the successor to—he knew not whom or what?—and then a child. Zaira had never mentioned she was a mother—what a

mother—what a woman—and all unknown to me ! Oh, Eva ! from your purity of heart, from your sanctity of manners, could I ever have experienced such a discovery—such a disappointment ! He hurried to his hotel ; a message was there from Zaira, entreating him to accompany her to some party ; he flung it away. A letter from Mr Asgill ; *that* he opened, read, and felt every line, every word of. Some of the words were these :—

* * * * *

“ I no longer adopt the style of a guardian, I address you as a friend. Of the preceding part of your conduct, I shall say nothing ; because I could not say what would not be more painful to myself than to you. You must have hardened your heart against all reproach before you left Ireland. I shall forbear reproaches. I speak in the hope, not of saving you from re-

morse for the past, but from ruin for the future. I have hopes you are not yet married ; if you are not, I adjure you fly from that dangerous woman, that enchantress, who intoxicates you that she may turn you into a brutal slave of passion. Fly from her, renounce her, her habits, her influence, her country, every thing belonging to her.

“ Think, rash, inebriated boy, of the consequence of being united to an actress.— Illiberal— illiberal—your polished, continental society will say. Be it so ; I submit to be called so ; I hope, I pray, that the world, on some points, may always be thus illiberal. I know the name of a profession is nothing ; a diplomatist may be sincere, and an attorney may be honest ; but the habits of a profession are every thing. Such is the peculiar delicacy, the natural domesticity of the female character, that a woman, who can give herself up to the public display of her person and talents for bread,

who can inhale the coarse and fetid air of a bravoing theatre as her vital breath, has departed from the character of a woman, has almost forfeited the privileges of her sex. I am convinced that a great part of our moral character depends on the kind of applause we are accustomed to seek and enjoy. *Laudatus a laudandis*, is a glorious distinction of the human character. Can it be applied to a woman who must be indebted to her physical powers for half her popularity, who is accustomed to the perpetual praises of her beauty, not in the whisper of timid delight, but in the shouts of a theatre? The life of such a woman must be passed in intervals of exhaustion and excitement. She has not a moment's pause for calm reflection, for domestic tranquillity, for that sober certainty of waking bliss that women were formed by Heaven to feel and to communicate. She is a creature out of her place,—a fine, abused, glittering, wretched being,—a thing produced

like the fish at the Roman banquets, to delight the unfeeling guest with its brilliancy and its agony. Theatres must be, in all civilized countries—a necessary evil—(and, like most evils, tolerated to prevent worse) and there must be actresses too—but why need we marry them? why need we break down the barriers that society has fixed between actors and audience? Would it be a seemly sight to see this confusion at the theatre? Is it not a scandalous sight to see it in the world, where the evil is ten-fold greater?

“Your Zaira has quitted the stage, I hear. Well—but can such a woman ever *be off the stage*?—Will not the mimetic habits, studied attitudes, artificial feelings, and insatiable thirst for indiscriminating applause accompany her every where? But she is a woman of genius—so much the worse ten thousand times. The pride and pretensions of a woman of literature, grafted on the second-hand sentimentality and

factitious existence of an actress, would be enough to drive a saint out of his senses ; and you are no saint, De Courcy. I am not fastidious ; I honour literature, *a quâ confiteor nullam partem meæ ætatis abhorruisse*. I do not condemn the stage, under certain restrictions ; but never would I wish to meet an actress but on the stage, or encounter an author but in his works. Louis XIV. said no man could be a great man to his valet-de-chambre. The littlenesses of those people when taken off the stilts, on which our imagination and their own vanity have helped to prop them, are intolerably mean, irritating, and disgusting. A literary woman professed, I should perhaps like to meet once or twice in mixt company ; but never at my dinner-table, if I wished for a comfortable meal ; never at my fire-side, if I wished for peace.

“ Illa tamen gravior, quæ, cum discumbere cœpit,
Laudat Virgilium, perituræ ignoscit Elisæ,

*Committit vates, et comparat inde Maronem,
Atque alia parte in trutina suspendit Homerum.
Cedunt grammatici, vincuntur rhetores, omnis
Turba tacet, nec causicus, nec præco loquatur
Altera nec mulier."*

"A woman of literature is infinitely more insupportable than a man ; for, to the pride and irritability of an author, is super-added the prescriptive distinction of her sex, that homage with which women in civilized society are intoxicated from their very cradles.

"Oh, my dear De Courcy ! my heart is wrung at this moment at the thought that my advice is, perhaps, coming too late. If it be so ; if you are married, return to Ireland ; bring with you your wife, and I will be the first to meet and welcome her with an aching heart. If you are not, leave her, leave her this moment, and for ever ! for God's sake, for your country's sake, and for your own, leave her ! Let not Europe witness the shameful spectacle of an inde-

pendent man, a gentleman, trailed over the continent in the wake of an actress, the overgrown pupil of a female pedagogue. Let not the country that can boast a Grattan, a Curran, a Moore, an Edgeworth, a Lady Morgan, a Philips, a Sheil, reckon a character so degraded among those of her children !

“ E. ASGILL.”

De Courcy answered this letter immediately, delighted to find an excuse for his feelings even in the reproaches of another. He announced his intention of returning to Ireland ; he did not speak either of Zaira or of Eva ; he dared not ; self-degradation assailed him when he thought either of his connection with the one, or his desertion of the other. A thousand things rushed on his mind while writing, that flushed his cheek, that “ doubly dyed it with imperial crimson.” The hints, the repeated hints of his being “ *un homme des bonnes fortunes* ;”

the constant suspicious deference to his opinions in Zaira; the doubtful homage; the invidious submission; the guarded manner of the old; the jealous sneers of the young—all—how could he have been insensible to them! it was madness, stupefaction.

All the day following, Zaira's billets came to enquire into the cause of his absence, and came unanswered. He was resolved to quit her—he knew not how—he dreaded that the next interview with her would overthrow his resolution—he dreaded, he bewailed, from the bottom of his heart, the total want of resolution in his character, the misery it must cause to others, the misery it had caused to himself. He remained the whole day in a state of gloomy irresolution, satisfied with but one decisive step he had taken; he had written to Mr Asgill, he had sent off his letter, and he was determined to abide by its contents, and quit the continent, where he had left

peace, character, and manly fame, for ever behind him.

Zaira, her notes unanswered, and molested all day by visitors whose presence was torture to her, sought refuge in her usual habits, and prepared to go to that last splendid party which was given to the Russian nobles the night before they were to follow the emperor on his way to England. While dressing, she made a thousand excuses to herself, disbelieved them all, and again repeated them to herself as she would to a stranger whom she was trying humanely to impose on. Perhaps this was the first night she felt the influence of her feelings predominate over that of her habits; her beauty, her genius, never met with more homage, yet she was wretched—but still she persisted in exacting the tribute always paid her in society with a kind of splenetic triumph—never had she felt so anxious for distinction, yet never so indifferent to it. Strange paradox of the human

heart, or rather of the human mind, that can prey on the spoils of feeling, and sit at the banquet with terrible gaiety, aggravated by the sight of the hand-writing on the wall that at once dooms and excites it. When destiny is thus armed against us, we seem to take a melancholy pleasure in rushing to the fight, though we feel the battle is lost.

The Russians whom Zaira met were not literary men, but they were sufficiently impressed with her literary fame to attend to her with the deepest interest,—the interest of curiosity, if not of feeling; and they knew the literature of their own country. Zaira struggled to remember the *success* of Voltaire, who, when conversing with Russian noblemen who lamented the sterility of their country, observed, that it had at least been fruitful in laurels. She exerted herself—she tried to recal some traces that once had existed in her memory of Rus-

sian literature. They had all escaped her ; she remembered but two trifling anecdotes, but the grace and spirit with which she told them made them interesting.

Knowing that uncivilized nations are most flattered by the praise of refinement, she mentioned, as a proof of it, the inscription on the medals of the Russian officers, who, having defeated the Turks in a naval engagement, were desired to wear on their reverse the words, " I was there,"—simple and sublime memorial ! Then she adverted to the rings, the mourning rings, worn on the death of Catherine, which bore the motto, " Paul consoles me." Then feeling her success, she passed on to the lighter compositions of the Russians, and repeated the singular political satire, in the form of a ballad, whose profaneness may almost be forgiven for its humour.

" God starting from sleep at a great noise, asked the angel Gabriel the cause of it ; and the angel answered, the Rus-

sians are at war with the Turks; and God answered, Who leads the Russians? and Gabriel said, the Prince G——; then God turned himself to sleep again. A great noise was again heard; the Deity started up, made the same enquiry, was answered again by the angel, the Russians are at war with the Turks. Who leads my beloved Russians now? said God; and Gabriel answered, the Prince P——, (Zaira took care to mention no names, for she knew nothing of the political or family connections of those whom she was addressing,)—then said God, Get me my boots, Gabriel, for now *I must go myself.*

The Russians were delighted with this reference to what they knew; it was seldom they met with it in Paris; the Parisians were too full of themselves. Zaira seemed to have naturalized them in the midst of a city so unlike Petersburg. Music followed; the Russians are musical, and ample justice was done to her by her delighted

audience. Some of them expressed their pleasure in those exaggerated phrases, that false or defective sensibility loves to shelter itself in. They talked of muses, and the strains of Orpheus, and melting rocks, and listening trees, and "such branches of learning." Zaira looked disconcerted.

"It is classical praise," said De Viosmenil.

"And for that very reason the last I would wish to hear. The ancients, possessing either a very limited knowledge, or a feeble sensibility, never describe the powers of music but by their effects on physical creation. They speak of their influence on rocks and forests, on which they could have no influence, but to add a thrilling power to their echoes; but they never tell us that music sent one image to the memory, or one feeling to the heart; that they loved to listen to it when it trembled over the surface of a wave, or lent a charm to moonlight."

When she got to the ancients, her Russian auditory soon quitted her. Dancing, in which they are national adepts, followed, and Zaira was waltzing with a Russian officer when De Courcy entered the room. He was glad to see it; he felt himself justified in leaving her to "a world she loved so well." As he gazed on the brilliant scene, another image involuntarily rose on his mind, like the deities in Homer,

"Οἷω φαινομένη, τῶν ὁλλῶν οὐτις ορατο."

It was the form of Eva; how unlike those around him! He started as if he actually beheld her, hurried into the crowd, and sought to lose himself in noise and glare. That night his manner to Zaira was unusually soft. Thus it is that we feel disposed to palliate the blow when we are determined to strike it with mortal violence. The unfortunate Zaira, deluded, and happy in delusion, resigned herself to all the in-

toxication of delight. When we love, we need no language to describe the changes of the heart ; to us the eye alone, and in a moment, the very moment we meet it, announces our destiny. So Zaira imagined, and perhaps she trusted to the language of the eyes, with as much reason as others trust the language of the lips. De Courcy attended her home ; he said nothing that might lead to an explanation ; perhaps he dreaded that an explanation might justify her, and leave him without an excuse ; perhaps he wanted a pretext, and when we do we are not very nice in the choice of one. He saw her to the door of her apartment, and took his leave with a tenderness, in which Zaira, blinded by imaginary happiness, did not discover the melancholy of involuntary remorse. After he retired, she returned to her anti-chamber for a book ; a piece of paper lay on the floor, she took it up. De Courcy, like many other per-

sons, was in the habit of trying over and over again the pens he was writing with, and of tracing on the paper on which he tried them some lines of the letter he was engaged in. He had written thus on a piece of paper, (while answering Mr Aggil,) "*I am weary, sick to the soul of my present situation; I shall fly from it as soon as possible.*"

He had retained the lines about him accidentally, and dropt them in Zaira's anti-chamber. She took them up; read them;—*they were his own words, written by his own hand.* No escape, no retreat from conviction—not a gleam of hope—and in the moment of her happiness, in a moment when his smile had been the pledge of renewed tenderness. *Impossible*—she took up the paper again—*certain.* How dreadful when the mind thus calls on hope, and is answered by despair—when it appeals to the mercy of doubt, and is repelled by the tyranny of absolute certitude!

She stood with her eyes fixed on the paper till she could stand no longer ; all was mist and darkness round her ; she did not see the chair she sunk on. Accustomed to strong efforts, she struggled for the resumption of her reason, and attained some degree of consciousness—horrible consciousness. The first moments of such returning recollection are like the first moments of those who recover after fainting on the rack. They hoped it was death, but are tortured into existence by pain ; the grating of the iron that is to renew their sufferings, invades their ears almost before they have recovered the sense of hearing. She awoke, she felt she lived, and her first sensation was a horror of life. She rose, and walked rapidly up and down the room ; violent pain always impels to motion ; she looked round on every object, to convince herself that they filled the same apartment in which he had just quitted her. On the walls, on the ceiling, on the floor,

on the furniture, on every thing above, below, around her, she saw legibly the same words traced, shifting, revolving, burning before her eyes, the same words, "I shall fly from it as soon as possible." She felt terrified at the increasing number, rapidity, and fiery light of the characters. She quitted the room, and went into a balcony filled with flowers; their fragrance and beauty seemed to reproach her wretchedness; she gazed upward on the sky, but the same letters were there. She looked up at the stars with a feeble reminiscence of the delight that the view had once given her; it was in vain—she could indeed see the stars, but she felt their beauty no longer. She retired to her room, and passed the remainder of that horrible night walking up and down the apartment, as if she was in search of something. The lights burnt out; she paused and drew aside the curtains,—the pale, but lovely light of the morning, came gleaming on, smiling at, mocking her. She

leaned her head against the edge of the window, but felt not the relief of tears. The day advanced without her being able to fix one idea in her mind, to form one plan. She expected every moment to see him enter and announce her fate. He came, as he usually did, but earlier than usual ; she advanced to meet him, almost convulsed with emotion ; she was instantly calmed by the perfect unconsciousness of his look. He knew nothing of her having seen the paper and being apprized of his intentions. He was surprised at her agitation, and to have seen them, one would have imagined that it was she who was about to enter on a subject of emotion, and he who was about to listen.

He came to enquire into her arrangements for the day ; and then she tried to recollect what *would have been* her plans the day before. He appeared to listen to them with pleasure, engaged to join in some of them, and retired just as

others were entering. In one moment Zaira passed from despair to delight. Not a word of explanation;—not a hint had been given. It was impossible that he could be determined to desert her, that he could visit her with so little emotion on the eve of separation. “Impossible,—impossible!” repeated the wretched Zaira; “and with those eyes and with that voice!—Their expression still unaltered, their tones still so delicious. Impossible—I will distrust my own senses first. It was scrawled in a moment without thought;—it relates to something else;—it was a quotation;—it was not his hand;—no matter what it was;—I am the happiest of women.” And the happiest of women she was all that day and all night; and who can say that her happiness was not as well founded as that of those who might deride its holowness and fallacy?

De Courcy was unusually soft and tender in his manner; this was a good omen,

but every thing would have been a good omen in her present state of excitement. Her penetration was blinded by her hopes, or she would have discovered that his accent and manner were exactly like those of a physician who softens his tone when compelled to pronounce there is no hope. For many days she struggled to impose on herself—(miserable imposition !). Fought the dubious battle of decreasing hopes and increasing fears—lived on a look—treasured a whisper—weighed glance with glance—existed but on the chance of hope that his looks supplied, when their expression denoted any thing but a thought of her—watched his conversation when addressed to strangers, and tried to extort a confirmation of her hopes from all, that rightly understood, would have realized her fears. Then hope itself could no longer deceive her ; her heart began to fail her ; certain decisive indications appeared in his manner. Perhaps he thought that unless

he undeceived her, she never would deceive herself; perhaps he thought that when cruelty is brief, it is like mercy. At all events, his manner could no longer be misunderstood. In despair, Zaira shut herself up for one day, the most horrible she ever had past—the desolation of her mind was united with that of her heart. Every thing she saw gave her a sensation of mingled fear, pain, and repelling sense of hostility and vacancy together, inconceivable, except to those who have suffered like her. Such sufferings have been.

That day De Viosmenil called; his intimacy justified his advancing to her apartment unannounced. Zaira fled from it on hearing the sound of his voice; the sight of a friend gives us horror in the first disappointment of passion; then we feel how inferior is every resource that human life, in all its infinite variety of relations, can offer, and the contrast is an insult to our agony. On the sofa which she had just quitted,

De Viosmenil found only a handkerchief drenched in her tears, and a volume of Lord Byron's poems. He knew English literature well; he took it up,—it was open at the notes,—the note where that great poet mentions, in prose as affecting as his poetry is sublime, the grief of his wild attendant on their separation,—the simple thrilling expression of that grief—*M'aquru*—" *He leaves me.*" The page was still wet with Zaira's tears, and the words were distinguished by reiterated pencil lines.

De Viosmenil comprehended the whole in a moment, and on the spot he wrote a letter to Madame St Maur, to entreat her, as her suit was likely to terminate favourably, to hasten instantly to Paris; and he added, that her presence might be necessary to *console* Zaira. Madame St Maur, on receiving this letter, lost not a moment in hastening to Paris; the very hour she arrived she hurried to Zaira's residence. Zaira understood the meaning of

this sudden journey, this abrupt appearance, and flinging herself into the arms of the affectionate, but French-hearted woman, (whose feelings actually deprived her of speech, the greatest sacrifice perhaps a French woman ever made, even to friendship,) she wept in agony. Madame St Maur wept too, like a good-natured child, who weeps because those it loves are shedding tears.

CHAPTER IV.

L'ultima che si perde è la speranza.—Tasso.

MADAME ST MAUR's advice was good, so was De Viosmenil's ; but people give advice in a cold reluctant way when they are forced to advise on the consequences of a step the direct opposite to what they have recommended. They cannot help giving solemn credit to their own sagacity, even in the very condolence they administer on its being neglected. Then followed the wretched expedients of beauty dreading the decline of its power. Grief made her humble ; she was terrified out of all reliance on her mental powers ;—they had deceived her ;—perhaps they had revolted him. She tried

to attract by her exterior ; she varied her costume, but nothing now seemed to become her. A thousand times, listening to the hopes of others rather than her own, or drawing temporary good omens from his silence, she reasoned herself, by resolute sophistry, into the belief that he would not desert her ; and just as she arrived at this conviction, the thought of the *lines in his own hand* would stab her like a dagger.

Often she tried to derive the impossibility of his leaving her, from *her* having herself given no cause for it. What folly !—When men desert women, it is sufficient that the *cause is in themselves*. Often she said to herself, “ What have I done unto thee, or wherein have I wearied thee ? Testify against me.” She did not know that it was enough that he *was* wearied. Once, when they were accidentally alone together for a moment, she resolved on speaking to him ; one simple word would have done it,

but a thousand came rushing to her throat, and choaked all utterance ; she tried to throw out all her genius and her passion in one appeal of eloquent agony ; and all failed her. A woman of less talent and less feeling would have spoken with ease. The sudden change of her expression, the dumb anguish of her look, were understood by De Courcy, but not answered. He turned away—some others entered—the opportunity was lost.

She still continued to appear with him at assemblies, at the theatres, at lectures, everywhere where popularity flattered her with the hopes her heart was hourly feeling the falsehood of ; she clung like declining royalty to forms, as she felt its power was diminishing. They went together the next day to hear a popular preacher. The preachers were now resuming their influence, and displaying their eloquence in Paris. Bourdaloue and Massillon were ex-

pected to revive under the auspicious shade of the lily once more.

The preacher was very eloquent, unlike the preachers of the continent, who waste their talents in panegyrising a saint whom no one cares three straws about. He took his subject from the charities of domestic life, of which all are doomed to enjoy the blessing, or bitterly to feel the want. His text was from St Peter, "Be pitiful, be courteous." There was much mention of the Bourbons, delightful to the ears of many, grating to the ears of more. He cared not how he brought them in; it was in 1814, and all was well. At last he came to the subject. He spoke of the religion of Christ, of its power to diffuse, not only its blessedness over the mind, but over the manners of mankind. He compared it to the precious oil that was poured, not merely on Aaron's head, but went down to the skirts of his clothing. He exclaimed, "Oh,

that we felt how much misery we may cause in life, and how little happiness it is in our power to bestow ! Even when, from the force of destiny, from the irresistible vicissitudes of life, we are compelled to be the cause of unhappiness to our fellow-creatures, how much of their wretchedness may be palliated by the manner of its infliction ! If we must draw the bow, we need not barb the dart with cruelty ; we need not dip it in the poison of wilful hostility ; we must often smite our victims in life, but let us smite them like a sacrificing priest, not like an immolating foe."

At these words the wretched Zaira turned her eyes all bathed in tears on De Courcy ; *his* were averted. He was remarking to De Viosmenil the peculiarity of the *chairs* hired in the French churches to the congregation, and making a comparison, not at all favourable to the former, between this arrangement so theatrical, and

the quiet decent accommodation in the pews of English churches. After this she gave up all hope of touching his heart by a public appeal—she trusted to she knew not what—she was conscious of a power, a depth of passion in her own heart, whose resources, if once developed, if once displayed to him, must infallibly affect him.

“If he would but hear me!” said she to Madame St Maur; “if I could but pour out before him the thoughts that are devouring my heart, he might not love, but he must pity me; he could not banish me; he would suffer me to follow as a slave.”

A slave!—thus the image of subjection always recurs to a woman, when the temporary triumph to which men raise her is over; with subjection her course began, and with that it is doomed to end. Madame St Maur strongly opposed this desperate step of throwing herself on her lover's mercy. She urged many reasons,

drawn from the wit and habits of Frenchwomen and Frenchmen; she had better have urged one plain reason, drawn from the nature of men and women in general—that when we rush to prostrate ourselves with hearts all on fire before those to whose hearts we cannot communicate a single spark, it appears like a dramatic scene where we are the sole actors, and, wanting sympathy, we almost begin to appear like impostors to ourselves. Thus the hope of appeal, of explanation, was altogether given up, and she lingered through a few days more of misery, during which she tried to find a shelter in his silence. “He has not *spoken*,” said she to herself; “all may be well.”

Wretched resource! when we imagine we shall not be deserted, because those who announce it a thousand other ways, have not announced it in words. That hour at last came. One evening at De Viosmenil's, Eu-

lalie de Tenranges, who was a violent Buonapartist, was mentioning, as the chief glory of his dynasty, that he had accumulated the spoils of all Europe in Paris, and thus reduced the tour of the continent to a visit to the metropolis of France,—as if men ought to have their throats cut for the sublime consolation, that, after their death, their plundered property would be carried off to embellish Paris.

“You will not now,” said she to De Courcy, “have to visit Italy to see an Apollo or a Venus de Medici.”

“It is no longer my intention to visit Italy,” said De Courcy firmly.

“Not visit Italy!” repeated the whole party, with various feelings, and in different discordant keys of amazement—“not visit Italy!—but what then?—where do you purpose to go?”

“I purpose—soon—to return to Ireland,” said De Courcy, his voice gaining firmness as he announced his resolution.

“ Ireland !—Ireland !” was echoed by all in such tones of horror, as if the place of his destination had been Pandemonium—“ Ireland !” all were in a moment in arms against the thought. Eulalie expostulated, in her most seductive tones, against it ; for she felt that when he quitted the continent, she must lose him for ever. M. d’Orbessan opposed it with manly reasoning ; for he wished his mind to be enriched by varied imagery, and his character strengthened by acquaintance with life. And the generous suffering friendship of Madame St Maur and De Viosmenil inspired them with un-availing eloquence. Zaira’s cause could not have been supported with more zeal, had they been pleading for their own lives. They read her doom in this resolution, and they struggled hard to avert it with zealous energy and fruitless kindness. They brought him to confess, that Ireland was a country where one could neither find intellectual or physical luxury ; where the inha-

bitants were neither cultivated enough to furnish the refinements of continental, or rich enough to supply the comforts of English life, (which they allowed rather grudgingly, and obliged to naturalize the word *comfort* with a very indifferent grace;) they brought him to confess, that, as an orphan, he had no ties of nature; as a man of taste and literature, he could have no enjoyment there. —Granted—he granted all—“What then could be his motive? what *could* be his motive?” repeated all the voices; their various tones of selfishness, disinterestedness, curiosity, and affection, mingling in one common tide of vehement enquiry.

“It is my country,” said De Courcy; and, as he uttered these words, the expression of his beautiful and heroic features seemed to announce a sentiment which he did not feel. He spoke merely to get rid of their importunity. The French taste for *sentiment* swallowed up all other feelings;

when he spoke, all applauded eagerly, all but Madame St Maur, who, with proud and generous indignation, retired, and seated herself beside Zaira, who had heard all. Zaira pressed her friend's hand in her cold one. The room was so spacious they could speak without observation.

"Yes," said Zaira, her tears dropping fast on the hand she held—"yes, my dear, my generous friend, I feel your kindness at my broken heart—I see the generous useless efforts your friendship is prompting you to make—it is all over. I am like the man in Lewis's tale of the Anaconda, who knew in his horrible retreat, surrounded by the serpent, all his friends were doing, and knew all was done in vain. His misery was only aggravated by the struggles for his relief; mine is aggravated too," said she, weeping more bitterly, "by the feeling that my crushed heart has not room now even for gratitude."

That night De Courcy went to the Theatre Feydeau ; the entertainments passed before him like figures in a magic lantern. He was weary of glare, excitement, attraction ; he wished for repose, but his heart denied him that. His powers, both physical and mental, had been too early excited ; his fluctuation of character was not entirely criminal—too easily excited, too early developed by love, beauty, and genius, he felt too early the miserable misanthropy of premature excitement. Excitement to men may be useful, to boys it must be fatal. Sir Philip Mordaunt thus, in early youth, tasted the cup of life, was disgusted, and perished by his own hand. As De Courcy retired from the theatre, he observed some one was following him ; he turned ; he caught a glimpse of the figure ; it was a female. A faint dread of an explanation, which he was determined to avoid, stole over him whenever the steps of a female were heard fol-

lowing him in the streets of Paris. He stopt; muffled as the figure was, he caught a glimpse of Zaira's features; he hurried on; the sobs of the muffled female followed, but did not make him turn. It is impossible to say how low love may reduce a woman.

When, the next day, Madame St Maur, who had sense enough left to see that a man could not be persecuted into love, expostulated with her on this desperate step, Zaira answered her, in wretched desperation, "Yes, I am sunk so low; I cannot hide it from myself; why should I try to hide it from others? Yes, I am degraded;" and she repeated it with *that ferocity against herself*, that leaves no room for reproach from others. "I am degraded—I am sunk even to the bare hope—the miserable wish that he may still remain—remain in my sight, barely in my sight, though lost to my hopes forever. Let me be placed where

I may but see him—merely see him. Let me but catch the shadow of his passing figure on the wall, that figure which contains all perfection. Let me but hear the sound of his voice, though never addressed to me. Let me but kiss the earth where his steps have been impressed. Let him but stay—stay where I may see him ;” she repeated in wild agony, and with convulsive action—“ and I am resigned ;—Let him marry, and I will crouch in some corner of the church to gaze on his bride ; and if he has a child—how I would idolize his child ! I would be a mother to it—Alas ! I might have been its mother.”

Madame St Maur could not reason with feelings she never knew ; she was terrified, —“ hopeless she spoke of hope”—all hope was vain. Zaira grew worse, she became delirious ; her friend then determined to watch that night by her miserable bed ; but the day was as bad as the night, and the following night she was much worse.

Madame St Maur never quitted her: the French terror of fever seemed to make an exception in her case; she watched her friend incessantly, and stole down every moment to enquire whether De Courcy had called. The call was not so punctual as she could wish, but she always went up with a flattering message. He had called, was in a hurry; *she* (*Madame St Maur*,) had great difficulty in keeping him from rushing to her apartment. When nothing better could be said, she assured Zaira that he was waiting in the anti-chamber, and that she would not suffer him to enter. That night—(the third night)—Zaira was in a state of stupor till a late hour; her attendants then undressed her, and Madame St Maur sat by her bedside. Zaira started up after a few minutes perturbed rest, and eagerly enquired after Madame St Maur's mother. Madame St Maur imagined this was delirium, and she replied that her mother was

in Languedoc, and was well. Zaira was silent for a long time, and then said, in a feeble tone, "I was dreaming of my own mother—I am not superstitious; but I never dreamt of that most unfortunate woman; that her image was not a precursor of some calamity."

Madame St Maur had never heard her speak of her mother before; but her sense of Zaira's sufferings was stronger than her curiosity, and she forbore to make any enquiries. Zaira slept soon after, but in a short time her sleep became dreadfully disturbed; her features were distorted and her respiration was a groan. Madame St Maur, terrified by the state in which she saw her, awoke her; she started up.

"I have seen her—I have seen her!" she cried, sitting up in her bed, and grasping Madame St Maur's hand, while a terrible expression pervaded her pale fixed features.

“ Seen whom ?—what have you seen ?” said Madame St Maur, terrified in her turn.

“ Oh ! that pale girl—that girl with the light hair, and blue eyes—that pale girl whom I murdered—Yes,” she continued with increasing energy, as her delirium diminished ; “ yes, murdered, as surely as if I had thrust a sword into her heart. I saw them all ; I was in Ireland again, and De Courcy was there ; he offered me wine, and while I drank it he told me it was blood—blood drawn from her heart ; and then he pointed to her—that pale girl—oh ! she was standing near so horribly pale—and she smiled on me with her white bloodless lips—and all her friends were behind her—her religious friends, in a kind of solemn mist—they were singing a hymn, and she joined them, and they parted all in light, and left me in darkness—such a darkness !”——

Madame St Maur tried to reason with

her on the folly of heeding a nervous dream.

“I am not nervous—I am not mad,” said Zaira; “it was no dream. I never saw her before, yet I know her as well now as if she were sitting beside my bed, Delphine; her light hair, her blue fixed eye, her horrible whiteness, her death-like smile, and I drinking her blood, and so I did. Oh, Delphine! what have I to answer for!—My triumph has been short, and every blow that I struck on her heart, has been visited on my own, and with a mortal force.”

Madame St Maur, terrified herself, exerted all her powers to sooth and compose her, and at last succeeded. She lay down again, and from exhaustion slept several hours; when she awoke, she drew aside her curtain, and saw Madame St Maur stand smiling at her bed-side.

“Oh!” said she, starting up, “you have good news for me—your salutation is like

that of the Chinese; felicity is painted on your countenance."

"De Courcy is in the anti-chamber," said Madame St Maur, smiling with affectionate delight; "he says he will wait there till he sees you, if you are able to see him."

"*If I am able.*" cried Zaira, springing up. "Oh, my dear Delphine! ring for my women; I am well, quite well; I shall be dressed in a moment."

The trepidation of her eagerness delayed her preparation, and she was a little shocked when she viewed herself in the glass; her women, however, the moment they had fastened the combs in her hair, pronounced her *mise à ravir*, and she was willing to believe them. She flung a shawl round her, to hide the obvious decline of her wasted figure, and hurried to the room where De Courcy was. Their meeting was not as warm on his side as she expected; perhaps it was impossible that it could ap-

pear sufficiently so to her ; but he was at least tender, anxious, and respectful. His visit, too, was of an unusual length, and when he retired, though she would have wished him to stay, she felt that her exhausted spirits could not support a longer visit, and she hoped that his consciousness of this might have induced him to shorten it. When all was over, Madame St Maur could not help flinging herself into Zaira's arms in an agony of affectionate joy. We need not say the embrace was returned. That day was happiness unmixed, without a reference to the past, without a glance at the future. The present was enough. The present always should be enough, for who can reckon on more ?

Did we know what is passing in the hearts of those on whom our happiness depends, how long would that happiness last ? Had they known, however, what was passing in De Courcy's, their would not have been diminished. He was touched,

awakened, pained by the illness of Zaira. He had time for thought, and he thought it was enough that one had suffered so much by him already ; he was determined to give Zaira an opportunity of explanation, to enquire about her husband (that husband of whom he felt as much indignant jealousy as if *he* had been the husband,)—and her child—if she had a child.

He felt, in his short separation from her, the suspended effect of her beauty, her talents, and her constant power of excitement. He felt that his existence with her might be disgraceful ; but without her was wretched. He was resolved to lead, to listen to an explanation. M. D'Orbessan, too, terrified at his agitation and sufferings during this interval, had qualified, moderated, almost retracted—there might be a husband—he did not know—there might be a child—of that he knew still less. It might be a report—merely a report. De Courcy in vain pressed for an explicit statement ;

he could not give one, and if he could he would not ; he trembled at the mischief he had done, though with the best intentions.

In the mean time, De Courcy thought—he thought of the night when Zaira fainted, on receiving a letter in Dublin ; of her subsequent illness ; of her retirement from the stage immediately ; of her hurrying so soon to France.—There was some mystery, and love can never bear a mystery in which it has no share.

Zaira's mysteries were evidently not those of love ; and the old woman's frightful intrusions, and evident knowledge of Zaira—all this pressed on his mind ; he was determined to know the worst—to do Zaira justice, he said ; he should have said, to do justice to his own suspicions.

He *waited on* her that morning ; *waited on* her ; (strange phrase for a meeting between those who have loved,) if possible to learn the truth ; she was obviously

too ill and too much agitated to bear an explanation. He resolved to defer it; and that evening, as he was walking in the Boulevards, a group of young men passed him; one of them he immediately distinguished as not being a Frenchman; the next time he passed him, he caught a stronger view of him. De Courcy trembled with emotion; he loitered near the spot, unable to proceed for some moments. The party soon returned; he started forward; one of them, the one he had recognized, quitted the rest, started forward too, and stood face to face, and breast to breast, opposite to De Courcy. It was twilight; they saw, and yet they did not see each other's presence; it was Montgomery who stood opposite to him. A short, hurried salutation—a cold grasp of each other's hands—and a long pause followed. Then Montgomery took De Courcy's arm, and walked away with him; they walked in silence for some time.

At length De Courcy said, in a broken

voice, "How are all our friends in Ireland?"

"Your friends—what friends?"

"The—the Wentworths."

"Mr and Mrs Wentworth are very well."

"And"——

"Well?"

"And their niece—Miss Wentworth—Eva?"

"She is dying."

De Courcy gasped—staggered—made a faint effort to tear open his vest, and fell senseless. Montgomery, terrified, rushed to his assistance; it was long before any assistance could restore him. Montgomery bared his throat and bosom, and, supporting him on his knees, watched him in silence, not without anxiety. He had long to watch; the relaxed jaw, the white, open lips, the cheek and forehead colder than marble, the very hair, seeming to lose all

its elasticity, impressed him with the perfect ghastliness of death ; and as he lay thus, Montgomery, struck with the contrast, could not forbear wondering how a being, frail and powerless as that before him, could be the cause of such sufferings to others : and reflecting on those sufferings, he almost wished him to remain so ; his renewed life seemed only a pledge of renewed misery, to all whose ill-fate it was to love him. He recovered, but his recovery was more frightful than his temporary death. He recovered to the wild delirium of raving agony ; he recovered to curse himself, to tear his hair, to dash himself on the ground with horrible prayers, that he might never rise alive ; in a word, to exhibit the frightful picture of one who is startled from the dream of pleasure by conscience for the first time tearing open the curtains, and awakening him.

With difficulty Montgomery had him

conveyed home, with still greater difficulty did he keep him in his bed, from which he was trying to spring, determined to set out that moment for Ireland. Kneeling, grovelling in unspeakable wretchedness (when his strength totally failed,) before Montgomery, he implored to be suffered to fly and save her. Montgomery would have pitied him; but the figure of Eva, as he last saw her before he quitted Ireland, filled all his mind, and dried up his heart; besides, he felt that his sufferings, violent as they were, were physical, and therefore transient, while the sufferings he inflicted on his victims were mental, and not soon to pass away.

The next day he was exhausted—alarmingly ill—a low intermitted pulse, restlessness, mutterings—every bad indication.

Zaira, who had heard an indistinct account of his agitation, on meeting an *Irish gentleman* the evening before on the Boulevards, was at his bedside in the morning.

There the first object she saw was Montgomery; her heart sunk within her at the sight; she felt as if she met her evil genius. De Courcy was not conscious of her being there; and when the next day and the next she came, she was told that Mr De Courcy was better, but declined seeing any one but the Irish gentleman. She turned away in silence; she thought of the time when he had waited at her door on her slightest indisposition, and kissed the pencil-lines in which she had assured him of her convalescence—she went home, and waited hour after hour for a message intimating a wish to see her—it came not—then she confined her hopes to a bare answer to her enquiries after his health—none.

De Viosmenil and Madame St Maur were with her, and, in the impatience of an agonized spirit, she turned from one to the other, as if either could give those hopes that were denied by the only source that could supply them. Then she was

appeased by De Viosmenil's promise to stand centinel at his door, and send her by her servants hourly intelligence of his health. De Viosmenil promised, but was much shocked to observe, that she thought more of his sufferings than of her own. This excluded all hope ; when our sufferings are derived from others, we know not when they will end.

De Courcy was better, better every hour ; for Montgomery no longer opposed his intention of returning to Ireland. De Viosmenil knew nothing of this, and hoped that she would be appeased by the intelligence of his recovery ; but as her fears for his safety diminished, other fears arose, and, with agonizing importunity, she besought him, if possible, to see De Courcy, to hear from his own lips what she had to *fear* or to *hope*, (she laid much emphasis on the first word, and uttered the last scarce audibly). —She implored but to hear her fate, and

still she could not resign the thought that De Courcy could not pronounce her fate.

De Viosmenil promised to bear faithfully this simple message, and swore to bring a direct and conclusive answer. Then when the words "a direct and conclusive answer" thrilled in her ears, she wished to delay what she might precipitate, but could not avert—then she tried to add the interest of passion and eloquence to her message—she felt too much could not be said in this last appeal; but when De Viosmenil, with the patience of French politeness, and the zeal of anxious friendship, repeated over her long, long address word for word, those very words that came burning from her very heart a few moments past, appeared to her, from the lips of another, so cold that she felt it impossible they could touch De Courcy, and burst into tears. She made a thousand alterations and additions, till her meaning became obscure and confused even to

herself; and she, at length, suffered De Viosmenil to depart, with the feeling which always accompanies our reposing our last concerns with another,—a feeling that they cannot act for us as if they were ourselves, and a consciousness that if we acted for ourselves, the event would be equally hopeless.

He went—returned. These lingerings of misery, this protracted distillation of wretchedness, when we watch it drop by drop, see every one gathering, and have time to count it before it falls, and almost measure the period of descent, is like the punishment described in Moore's poetry, where the criminal is placed beneath the

“ Drippings of the gory dew,
From the corse of him he slew.”

Zaira suffered all this. De Viosmenil's answer could not mitigate it; he could not see De Courcy; but he *could* see servants

busy, trunks packing—all the “fearful note of preparation” announcing a journey. Then Zaira thought of employing Madame St Maur as her intercessor, for she had sunk to the hope of intercession. Madame St Maur dreaded the office, for she feared that her feelings for her friend would operate against her interests, or rather her hopes. She went, however; insisted on seeing De Courcy, *succeeded in seeing him*, and the result has been already told in language which we can never hope to equal.

Zaira, who remembered the influence which the animation, the naivete, and the exhaustless spirits of Madame St Maur had obtained over De Courcy, implored her to exert it in her behalf.

“ Misera hoc tamen unum
Exequere anna, mihi, solam nam perfidus ille
Te colere, arcanos etiam tibi credere sensus—
Sola viri molles at aditus et tempora noras.”

VIRGIL.

The rest may be best told in the same exquisite language.

*“ Talibus orabet, talesque miserrima fletus
Fertque refertque soror, sed nullis ille movetur
Fletibus.”—VIRGIL.*

Then all was over. Zaira herself had hope no longer—she now found employment in watching, by her servants, every movement at De Courcy's—sometimes she appeared happy when she heard there were no immediate preparations for a journey ; oftener, when she saw from their countenances what she was to hear, she shrunk from the sight, and motioned them from the room, without listening to what they had to say.

One day the person, from whom they had bespoke attendants to accompany them when they were to quit Paris, came to en-

quire when she proposed to set out. Zaira was silent for some time; the person, imagining it was forgetfulness, repeated her former orders, and reminded her it was near the time when she and Mr De Courcy had proposed to leave Paris. "And so he will," said Zaira, "perhaps sooner."

She dismissed the person, who went away surprised at this change of her intentions. A party who were going to Italy, pressed her soon after to join them;—she shook her head. "Ah, you are indispensable," said one of them; "your genius will alike embellish life and antiquity."

"Not now, I fear," said Zaira. A day or two more elapsed, and *that* arrived which had been fixed on for her leaving Paris with De Courcy. Madame St Maur observed the increased gloomy agitation of Zaira that day, though she knew not the cause. "These continued blows of accident are what the heart is least able to bear."

When one great and overwhelming calamity is thus parcelled out into minute portions, and brought before our minds in distinct features, when not a trivial circumstance can occur without recalling what we were stubbornly struggling to forget,—not a moment can strike without sounding the knell of departed happiness; our resolution is in vain, and every step we take, the ground seems stuck with daggers.

One day she seemed unusually calm; De Viosmenil and Madame St Maur were happy and deceived; she entreated to be left alone at an early hour, and promised to compose herself to rest; they believed her. It is dangerous to leave persons suffering under an incurable calamity; like madmen, they have always the cunning to deceive their keepers. They left her. Zaira had heard that day that De Courcy intended to quit Paris on his way to Ireland, in

the evening ; she resolved to make one last appeal, and to make it in person.

No mind could be worse disposed than De Courcy's at this moment to such an appeal. He had to contend with the morbid feelings of a broken constitution, broken by premature excitement,—the remorse of a conscience wounded in youth, when the wound is incurable,—and the loathings of unspeakable horror at the thought of her to whom he was willing to ascribe the dying sufferings of Eva, that he might escape the burthen of them himself. Zaira's beauty now appeared like the effect of deliberate seduction,—her genius like a spell. Her great and good qualities were all undervalued—her simplicity of character, sweetness of temper, and genuine humility, (the humility inseparable from true genius;) the devotedness of heart with which she was attached to him, were all crimes in the eye of one who now could see nothing but

crimes in her conduct, to hide his sense of his own.

With all this fatal prepossession against her presence, against her very image, was combined a determination to leave France for Ireland,—a determination the stronger, because it had no distinct object, but merely a general hope of relief from the change of place. Montgomery, who urged this step, saw its inefficacy every moment; but, he knew that a vehement resolution with weak minds stands in the place both of principles and feelings; it flatters them with an appearance of the energy they want, and they are satisfied with the flattery. So De Courcy was to set off for Ireland in a few moments; those few moments were all that remained to Zaira. As soon as De Viosmenil and Madame St Maur left her, she wrapped herself in a mantle and went to the hotel where De Courcy resided. He was out;—she sat down in his apartment.

Every thing around her announced his approaching departure ;—that nightly preparation, at once tumultuous and silent ;—the hurrying tread of domestics ;—lights burning feebly, from the haste with which they were carried about ;—trunks, packages heaped on the deranged furniture ;—the desolate look of rooms which the possessor is about to quit ;—she saw it all.

In a few minutes De Courcy arrived ; he entered without knowing she was there ; discovered her ; started and turned away. She rose, attempted to follow him, but her cold and stiffening feet seemed nailed to the floor. He passed rapidly from room to room, —gave directions in a hasty voice, and recalled them again ; at last, returning, he threw himself on a sofa at the opposite end of the room, folded his arms, and letting his head fall on his bosom, remained silent. The room was very dark, he could hardly see her muffled figure, but he could

hear her sobs, her choked attempts to speak, and see her try to hold out her clasped hands to him in an agony of silent supplication. He bent his head still lower, and rooted his eyes on the ground. It would have been some consolation to the wretched Zaira to know he dared not look up; one glance, one word, might have overthrown his resolution. Suddenly a servant entered, and whispered him—he rose; Zaira rose too—she felt her hour was come—in a moment, in less than a moment, she felt him dart from his seat, felt him at her feet, felt him clasp her in a last, last embrace, (like that in which death is mingled with passion,) and rush from the room. Every object then swam before her; she neither saw or heard, but she knew his steps rapidly descending the stairs, knew when he touched the last, when he rushed through the passage, when the door opened—closed—then the thunder of the wheels, as they

bore him away, shook the pavement—She heard, and felt that if one word could have retained him, she could not utter it.

CHAPTER V.

————— Orbs resedit
Diriguitque mala.

OVID.

THE first hours of desertion by those we love, are hours of which, not even those who have felt them, can describe the misery. It is "the first dark day of nothingness;" moments pass on, and thoughts follow thoughts, like the waves of the sea under a midnight sky—neither shade, nor light—neither distinction, or pause. One gloomy level of unbroken darkness, moving, but not diversified—with the sufferer time is no more. They feel like the guilty in a future state, who, in the terrible description of the French preacher, are made

to ask each other in hell, What is the hour ? and the answer is—Eternity ! It is in this state that we look around, and wonder that things continue the same, when *we* are no longer so—that objects make the same impression on our senses, without leaving any on our minds—that the sun still shines, and we cannot see its light—that men continue to speak, to be employed about we know not what, for we have ceased to understand the language of life. We are surprised to feel the hands of friends press our's still, when we can no longer return the pressure. The world has past away from us ; we live in a world of our own, a wild world of misery, dreams, and recollections. We are as if in the grave, but without the repose of the grave.

Madame St Maur and Vlasmenil now never quitted her for a moment, and these two amiable persons seemed to have consolidated their affection for each other into

one single sentiment of friendship for Zaira. In their hands she was quite passive—did every thing she was asked—felt nothing that was done for her. When they assisted her into a carriage, she suffered them to direct it where they pleased, without any observation. Sometimes when Madame St Maur remarked the beauty of the sky, or of the country, she wept. Nature had still a power over her heart—a power to give pain.

At home they always surrounded her with a select society; but she heard nothing, answered no one, without an effort painful to those who addressed her. She sat among them passive and abstracted. Sometimes, her natural sweetness struggling with her wretched situation, she felt she ought to appear sensible of the kindness, and tried to reward it with a smile; but there was a mixture of vacancy and ghastliness in it that terrified them.

At other times, when literature was dis-

cussed, after a vain effort to collect her ideas, she hurried out of the room,

“ Nor quite unconscious of her wretched plight,
Gave one sad look, and hurried out of sight.”

BLOOMFIELD.

Even these struggles were soon to be terminated. One day they were driving through a village near Paris. Its inhabitants had been great sufferers in the late war; and Zaira, who heard of their distress on her arrival, had relieved it with munificence almost regal.

Shortly afterwards, in one of her excursions with De Courcy, she happened to pass through this village; the inhabitants recognised her, and rushed from their houses to load her with blessings, while the children (with the onction and theatrical feeling of French children) flung a profusion of flowers beneath the wheels of her carriage. De Courcy was delighted with this scene, which exalted his passion in his own eyes by

the virtues of its object. Zaira was affected, and she said to De Courcy, "I am jealous of the happiness these people give me; I would not wish to feel a moment's happiness but what I owe to you." She remembered the rapture with which De Courcy kissed her hands.

All this seemed to pass before her eyes, to pass through her heart, as she went through the village, without either applause or passion. Her benevolence was now forgotten; her heart was broken—

"There died the best of passions, Love and Fame."

In dreadful agony she sat back in the carriage, and signified, by her gestures, that they should get on as quick as possible. Her agitation that day suggested to Madame St Maur the expediency of removing her from Paris, where every object seemed calculated to revive what it was their unavailing struggle to make her

forget. De Viosmenil agreed with her, and they went to a villa of his about ten miles from Paris. Zaira made no opposition, she hardly understood their proposal, and acceded to it to avoid having it explained to her. They both agreed in hoping that this removal would be beneficial to her; they agreed also in peopling this retreat with all that taste, literature, and affection could supply; but they could not agree on the subject of De Courcy's precipitate desertion, and many and eager were their battles about it.

De Viosmenil, reasoning on the nature of man *in general*, derived it from the inconsistency of the human heart, which in De Courcy's case had been precipitated by a fastidious and satiated sensibility—a too early and dangerous acquaintance with the luxuries of the heart. Madame St Maur, arguing from the feelings of Frenchwomen, *in particular*, ascribed it all to the seductions of Eulalie de Touranges. “I saw it;

I saw it all—saw it from the first. I observed her the night she presumed to talk of Racine and Shakespeare—*She* talk of Racine and Shakespeare!—But her *mica* was just equal to ore with that silly Irishman. Do you know she had one day the confidence to say to me—Yes, Zaira has great talents—I have discovered them—*She discover Zaira's talents! But what effrontery!* it is just like the impudence of Horace Walpole,* who pretended to discover that Johnson had sense.” Madame St Maur, it seems, understood English literature better than the human character—and that is a very singular praise for a Frenchwoman.

* *Vide* Walpole's Letter published in the first volume of the *Miseries of Authors*. By M. D'ISRAELT.

CHAPTER VI.

— tunc nec mens mihi, nec color
Certa sede manet—arguens
Quam lentis penitus macerer ignibus.

HORACE.

DE COURCY and Montgomery set out ; they went by the way of Bourdeaux and Cork, for Montgomery, who was of age now, had some business to settle with his guardians there, and he was resolved that De Courcy should not quit him, or rather that he would not quit De Courcy till they were both safe in Ireland. He supported him on the journey by suggesting hopes that he hardly felt himself, that they might not be too late.

De Courcy's rapidly declining health struck him, and he began to tremble for both. It was August—lovely weather—just three months since De Courcy had quitted Ireland. When dates are connected with subjects of strong emotion, how accurately the memory retains the most trivial. During the voyage, it was De Courcy's constant habit to remain leaning over the deck till a late hour—dangerously late for him. When Montgomery could not dissuade him from this practice, he partook it with him. One night, after De Courcy had gazed long on the beauty of the calm moon, he exclaimed,—“She was so lovely!” (Montgomery hoped he was thinking of Eva,) “How often, on such a night as this, we have gazed on heaven together, till we felt that sublime inebriation which such a light infuses, when we taste it along with those we love!—How pure, how celestial was her eloquence then!”

It is impossible to believe that her heart was not as pure as her sentiments.

'If the ill spirit have so fair an house,
Good things will strive to dwell with it.'

Montgomery bore all this with patience, (though he felt it could not relate to Eva;) he thought it the natural expression of inevitable regret, better indulged than suppressed. "Was she not very lovely?" said De Courcy, appealing even to Montgomery.

"She was," said Montgomery; "but the Jews, when they saw the second Temple, wept."

No allusion was made even to Zaira's name during the rest of the voyage. Montgomery hoped he would have been detained in Cork but a short time by his business; but De Courcy's increasing ill health compelled him to continue there a considerable time, and when at length they set out, he

felt as if De Courcy was hastening to join Eva in the tomb. They arrived in Dublin about the middle of September. Many changes had taken place since De Courcy had quitted it. At first no one, not even in her own family, could observe the slightest alteration in Eva's health or habits. She looked pale indeed, paler than usual ; but that caused them little surprise, and no concern, while they all saw her as active in her charitable visits, as earnest in her religious duties, as ready to every good word and work as she ever had been. The name of De Courcy never passed her lips, and it may be concluded it was never uttered by any of her friends.

Thus passed on a few, very few weeks ; it was easy, then, for the quick eye of affection to mark a languor in her motions, a reluctance to conversation, which, however, alarmed no one but Mrs Wentworth. Then appeared rapidly " the many infallible

signs" that a mortal change is about to be wrought in the mortal tabernacle. They came in quick and alarming succession ;— the failing appetite—failing—gone—the vegetables spread over the untasted meat to hide it from her watchful family—the plate conveyed away by a glance to the servant—the indifference to conversation declining gradually into an unconsciousness of what was said, till it was actual pain to give the simplest directions to the servants, or utter an answer to the plainest questions, on which she was compelled long to pause before she could discover their meaning.—The mist that began to spread alike over the faces of visitors, friends, and family, till she scarce knew one from the other, and spoke to them almost at random,—the voices even of those she knew, sounding as if they came from a great distance, their sound failing, not increasing, as the sentences ended. The dreadful apathy with which she mingled in the religious ex-

ercises, struck herself. Other symptoms she would have regarded less, but they forced themselves on her. When she took up a book, she read page after page mechanically, without retaining a sentence; then she fixed her eye on the lines, and tried to force her attention in vain;—she read, her eyes only grew dim;—she closed the book and tried to examine her memory, but her memory retained nothing;—she attempted to excite herself by walking up and down the room, but this motion only increased the confusion of her head, and the objects she was accustomed to see every day, were now becoming every day more and more indistinct. Then came the shortened respiration;—sighs every moment were becoming necessary to enable her to draw her breath, till respiration itself became only a succession of sighs. Often she placed her hand on her heart, and wept from the pain with which she drew her breath.

Soon more distressing symptoms occur.

red, more perplexing, *for no one could guess the cause*, that being always the phrase when the sufferer is known to be dying of a broken heart. Physicians were then called in ; Mrs Wentworth, with trembling affection, insisted on medical advice, and Wentworth, proud of his wealth, feed them liberally ; of course it was easy to procure a variety of opinions. Weary of examining symptoms that could never lead them to the source of her complaint, they all luckily agreed in *change of air* for the patient. Change of air was to do wonders. They must go to the sea-side,—must go to Bray, the medical men said, for medical men always like to point out a place, as if there were a charm in a name.

Mrs Wentworth was gratified by the readiness with which Wentworth gave up his usual summer visit to Glassnevin, where he had had a villa ever since he had given up business. She prepared for their removal to Bray, and Wentworth, in the mean time,

went about among his evangelical friends, and many was the prayer-meeting at which he knelt, where teachers engaged in prayer at his request, for a female believer under the hidings of God's face, and sometimes for a female believer grievously buffeted by Satan. To Bray they went. Eva smiled passively. The physicians attended, found the sea air too keen for her, took more fees, and recommended Dundrum, mountain air, and goats whey. Mrs Wentworth's spirits revived with the prospect of a change of place; her spirits had nothing else to support them; she knew more than the physicians knew, but she echoed what they said, because she wished to believe it. Dundrum, mountain air, and goats whey were to work miracles. Wentworth, on his removal, enquired, "Was there an evangelical chapel in the neighbourhood?"—that was all.

Eva left Bray, with the addition of a slight cough to her former tendencies; but that was the consequence of the sea-air, (so

every one said,) and the mountain-air would soon remove it. This redoubtable mountain played for another month on Eva's gasping lungs, but the battery was ineffectual. Still every visitor said she was better; she must be better from such frequent change of place. Mrs Wentworth believed them in the credulity of despair—Wentworth believed them, because he thought hopes given were a kind of value received for his money, of which he was not sparing—the visitors believed, because people believe any thing improbable sooner than return without some news after visiting an invalid—Every one believed them but the patient—she had good reasons for mistrusting them, but she kept them to herself, or suffered them to be read only in her looks. It was a horrid thing to see her come into the breakfast-room every morning with those looks, and with that voice to say “she was better.”

Towards the beginning of August, her principal physician was obliged to go to the

country. He took his leave with much kindness, urged attention to his prescriptions, and, shaking her hand with a gay expression of hope, desired her to be well when they met in winter. Eva smiled; Mrs Wentworth saw that smile, and, quitting the room, wept bitterly.

The work was going on—that hand, which no human hand can repel, was urging on the wheels of life with a rapidity irresistible, and no longer imperceptible. Mrs Wentworth trembled at the brilliant deepening colour, which every other eye hailed as the glow of health.—“Never saw Eva look so well before,” said the visitors with one voice.

“I never saw her look so before,” said Mrs Wentworth, with a deep sigh.

“Eva has now so far recovered her *looks*,” said Mr Wentworth to his wife, “that I think we need no longer delay the mention that even her late awful backsliding has not entirely alienated our spiritually-minded friend Macowen. He is willing still to ac-

cept of her as his wife, and to restore her steps to the way of peace ; and the change of her looks"—

"Never mind her looks," said Mrs Wentworth, rather hastily for *her* ; " wait till her health is better."

" Her health !" said Wentworth, in amaze ; " sure she *ought* to be quite well—all the physicians say so. I am sure they have been paid regularly ; and her colour, I never saw it so bright—without exercise, without food, for she never eats any thing, she comes from her room in the morning with a glow in her cheeks I never saw before."

"Nor I either," said Mrs Wentworth, with tears in her eyes.

"Then what objection, since her health is restored, to her being united to that *gifted* young man ?"

"Mr Wentworth," said his wife, with an earnestness that made him start, " let me implore you—*implore you*, not to mention this subject to Eva for some time."

“For what time?” said Wentworth. “I am willing to wait a reasonable time; but she should be prepared, that I am resolved not to be made a fool of twice by a girl—I am resolved that she shall be united to him.”

“She never will,” said Mrs Wentworth, “to him or to any one;” and her tears gushed out, and almost choaked her voice, while she struggled to add, “she is dying!”

“Dying!” repeated Wentworth in amaze, not without a mixture of anger—“Then I consider myself very ill-used indeed; taking so many fees, going from place to place, and to die after all; I might have been told that at once. You know, Mrs Wentworth, *Eva is no relative of ours; we have no tie to her, and her conduct latterly has been productive of nothing but uneasiness to us both.*”

“*I thought that matter had been settled long ago,*” said Mrs Wentworth. “*The interest of her fortune has amply paid for*

her board and education, and the protection she has enjoyed under the name of your niece."

"Well—well," said Wentworth; "but, if you think she is dying, had we not better have a prayer-meeting, and get some spiritual man to wrestle with the Lord in her behalf?"

"Certainly, I think so. I do pray, I do lift up my heart to God for her; but it would be my wish that the effectual fervent prayer of the righteous should also plead for her; and, till we know more of the mind of the Lord concerning her, let us talk no more of marriage."

Wentworth acceded with a readiness that astonished his wife. She looked up in his face to discover an ulterior meaning. He had turned away—a thought had occurred to him, that, on its first intrusion, he repelled with disdain—it came again, and was not treated so discourteously—again, and he began to parley with it.

Now, the thought was this; that if Eva died, it was highly improbable her fortune would ever be claimed at his hands, considering the mysterious manner in which both she and it had been entrusted, or rather thrust into them. "Now," said Wentworth, trying to misunderstand his own motives, "that would enlarge the sphere of my utility. I would double my subscriptions to the Bible Society, and the Missionary Society, and the Society for Propagating the Gospel in Foreign Parts—I will subscribe to the fund for purchasing livings in lay patronage for evangelical preachers; I will treble my donations at Bethesda Chapel—and when she dies, (*if* was already exchanged for *when* in his reasonings), I will maintain her school, and leave it an ample sum in my will."

This being settled, Wentworth set off for Dublin, to meet the trustees of a charitable institution. The physician who attended that day declared Eva much worse;

the all-powerful mountain-air had failed ; and the goat's-whey was little better than it should be. The last medical attendant was all for air and variety ; the present was all for warmth and repose. Her native air, the air of Dublin, was far better for her in the chill mornings of an Irish September, ushered in with a light frost, than the keen breeze of the mountains, whose spicula, this gentleman said, were only exacerbating her lungs. Back to her native air she must go, (*apropos* she was born in Munster, two hundred miles from Dublin,) and there warm rooms, early hours, the strictest precautions against cold, abstinence from animal food, and plentiful draughts of *Koumis*, were to do for her that—which no mortal medicine now could do. So back to her native air (as it was called) she went ; and, to the surprise of all, in a few days she was visibly better.

The physician triumphed ; Macowen exulted, (to himself,) but he could not look

at her now without "glittering with ungodly dew," and his red hair actually looking redder with joy. Even Mrs Wentworth was deceived, but Eva was not; she knew the cause, *it was a place of recollections*. Here they had met, loved, and parted; and had she been acquainted with the neglected poetry of Lee, she might have exclaimed,—

" There's not a soul beneath,
Who died (as I must die) for fatal love,
That better knows the gloomy arbours there,
Than I each chamber in this *house of death*;
'Twas here"——

LEE'S *Mithridates*.

She saw him every where, she heard his voice, she saw him on the seat where he had last sat, remembered every board he had trod, and when the door was opened by any one, still felt (*a little more faintly every day*,) the delicious agitation of heart that announced his presence before she saw

him. It was when twilight came, that the indulgence of this visionary existence became most exquisite. She dwelt with him in her mind; held imaginary conversations; and heard, amid silence, the tones of that voice which, dying as she was, had not ceased to charm her. The state of her mind began to resemble that of the light, which flattered its morbid indulgence—clouded, but not obscured,—more solemn, picturesque, and full of imagery, than the brightness of day.

She yielded to this indulgence at first without resistance, not feeling the fatal effect it was producing on her remains of life. It was like the system of assassination formerly practised in Italy, when poison was conveyed in the most exquisite perfumes. Her religious feelings soon returned, and warned her away from such indulgence—it was suitable neither to her feelings, or her situation. She obeyed the summons—she felt it came from God—then she gave up

all thoughts, all feelings, and struggled to think of God alone. She struggled, but did not soon succeed. The apparent restoration of her health furnished her with an excuse for renewing her former habits ; no one opposed her. Mrs Wentworth was happy, so was her husband ; for, as the religious people were now coming to Dublin, he had ample employment in his way ; two of the Bethesda people had lately joined Mr Kelly's congregation ; some of Mr Kelly's had also joined another body of separatists, (after a vigorous pamphlet-controversy on baptism, which nobody read but themselves.) Mr Wentworth continued to repeat, " they went out from us, because they were not of us ;" and Mr Kelly's followers repeated exactly the same text, to console themselves for the defection of their fallen brethren.

Eva's first attentions were paid to her school ; she sat among them, and wondered that she no longer felt the same plea-

sure—she heard their lessons, that is, she held the book in her hands as long as she could, while her dim eye was ineffectually fixed on the page, where every line seemed doubled—she tried to superintend their work, but after giving directions, which she recalled again, without being able to correct them, and praises all at random, mistaking the names of those to whom she addressed them, she was compelled, faintly smiling, to resign her charge to some other. It was this touched her most—this little seminary of candidates for heaven had been her delight in happier hours ; and she supplicated fervently, with many tears, that her health, or, at least, her intellects might be spared, till she saw some of them on whom her cares and prayers had been bestowed, “ bring forth fruit unto everlasting life.” *Formerly she had prayed for them, now she was compelled to pray for herself.* She was still able to

walk out ; the air, the open air, was all that seemed to revive her ; we cling to it eagerly when we feel we have not long to inhale it. At all events, it is a great matter for a sufferer to be enabled to encounter the enemy in the open air. We think ourselves better when we can thus mimic the habits of convalescence. She still went to Bethesda Chapel, though the ascent to Dorset-Street was trod with slower steps, and more painful respiration every day. She mixed, also, in the parties of her religious friends, where reading the Scriptures and praying formed the object of meeting ; yet these were becoming less and less pleasant to her, for not even the serious habits of the females could altogether suppress their curiosity about De Courcy's leaving her, and her subsequent illness. One night, at one of these meetings, Macowen (her persecutor) was requested to give "a word of prayer." He complied ; and whether he now despaired of his prey, or was will-

ing to display his precatory eloquence at her expence, the whole of his supplication was addressed to the Deity *through* her; he implored the mercy of Heaven for a wanderer who had strayed from the fold; for one "who had forsaken the guide of her youth, and forgotten the Covenant of her God; who had loved strangers, and after them would go." And as he went on, aided by the sympathising murmur of the audience, his memory supplying him with images, and his passions with eloquence, there was not a single metaphor in the Old Testament descriptive of the apostacy of the Jews from their God, that he did not apply to Eva, who, compelled to kneel out this martyrdom, wished to sink into the earth to escape it. This cruel holding her up as an object to a numerous circle, was the most painful trial she had yet experienced. Wentworth thought it excellent, and expressed much hope from the strivings of that godly man in her behalf.

Mrs Wentworth thought very differently ; her feelings were so much outraged, she could hardly remain on her knees ; and when her husband soon after proposed Macowen to be of a party that was to meet at their house, Mrs Wentworth strenuously declared, " He should not come into their city, nor *shoot an arrow* there." And Wentworth was not displeased with her opposition to his wishes, because it was couched in the language of Isaiah, whom Macowen had taught him to call the fifth evangelist.

Eva's resources were now contracting very rapidly. She no longer went out ; she was becoming more reluctant to meet the evangelical parties at home—there were a number of females always—much whispering with Mrs Wentworth, who, in vain, tried to repel it. Her friends were kind, but still they were human beings ; and curiosity is human too. She imagined every eye was bent on her since Macowen's

public appeal, and from every eye she now wished to shrink.

Music—that resource alike powerful in society and solitude—that had failed her ; her voice no longer could be heard among the singers at Bethesda, it now could scarcely be heard across the narrow room. She often tried to sing the hymns she had been accustomed to lead in, and was astonished at her own deficiencies ; for, as her vocal powers had never been the subject of her thought, this failure seemed to her like a failure of devotional sentiment. She was soon undeceived ; the loss of her voice forced itself on her, as little as she had once regarded it ; and she was now obliged to murmur those praises which once she uttered in tones that might have been accompanied by the harps of cherubims. Her voice, broken, feeble, but exquisitely toned, appeared rather like melodious respiration than music ; it seemed as if she was collecting its decli-

ning powers to join that choir, of whose harmony there shall be no interruption and no end.

Society, (such society as she was accustomed to)—Music, (the music she loved,) were thus lost to her. Reading became her only resource; Wentworth's loaded shelves promised exhaustless materials for religious study; but the works of man interested her no longer, her attention failed in following them; she had a mistrust, a fear of delusion, of uncertainty; and all her faculties, withdrawn from human teachers, reposed in confidence on the word of God alone. Wentworth saw the Bible in her hands every day, and sometimes wondered she was so long in reading the *lessons of the day*. He called it formality; she felt it was not: he pressed on her some popular works of divinity; she clung to her Bible. With delight beyond expression, she felt that her faculties, that were growing so cold and obtuse, kindled as she read the sacred

writings—she understood, felt, lived at every line—weakness was suspended, and death itself seemed to pause, and spare the moments that were devoted to eternity; but, like a relentless creditor, it put all to the account, and exacted it to the uttermost farthing. The Bible was her constant study—feebly she turned over the pages of human writers—closed them;—opened the pages of inspiration—all was light—it was the word of God—no error—no dream: The words of man might deceive—*had* deceived her;—the word of God could not. She knelt, and read the precious pages on her knees as long as she was able to kneel. Inestimable volume! that reveals, amid all the vicissitudes of life, the only two certainties known to man—*grief* and *futurity*. What sufferer can read it, and not feel his sufferings anticipated by that sorrow that passeth all sorrow? Every thing in the sacred books either instructs or consoles the sufferer; but all prepares

for suffering. This is the truest lesson of life—That “man was made to mourn,” is not merely the sentiment of a poet, proud of sentimental melancholy—it is the experience, the daily terrible experience of life. Even He who knew life best, proclaimed its awful universal character, “Come unto me, all ye that labour, and are heavy laden;” and in this invitation did he not include the whole of the human race, for who is there that does not labour—that is not heavy laden? But the Bible reconciles us to suffering, by shewing not only that it is the path all must tread, but the path the best have trod—a path consecrated by the steps, the tears, and the blood of those to whom humanity looks up for solace and for elevation. Patriarchs and prophets, saints and martyrs, and Him whose name must not be named in a page so light, they were all destitute, afflicted, and tormented, and shall we repine?

This was the question Eva asked her heart, and the answer spoke peace to it.

She had also those outward mitigations of her sufferings which the mild and lingering nature of her mortal disease did not yet withhold from her. She made copious extracts from the Scriptures, and this employed a great part of her time. They were written with tolerable steadiness for a hand trembling with emotion, and weakened by approaching death ; there was only one passage that betrayed a failing hand—a tremor of the heart. “ It was not an open enemy that did me this dishonour ; for then I could have borne it ; neither was it mine adversary that did magnify himself against me, for then, peradventure, I would have hid myself from him ; but it was thou”—— Here the extract was broken off.

The weather was unusually fine, though it was September, and the evenings mild and beautiful. Eva passed them almost entirely in the garden. She had always

loved the fading light, and delicious tints of an evening sky, and now they were endeared by that which endears even indifferent things—an internal consciousness that we have not long to behold them. Mrs Wentworth remonstrated against this indulgence, and mentioned it to the physician ; but he “ answered neglectingly ;” said, any thing that amused her mind could do her no harm, &c. Then Mrs Wentworth began to feel there was no hope ; and Eva was suffered to muse life away unmolested. To the garden every evening she went, and brought her library with her ; it consisted of but three books—the Bible, Young’s Night Thoughts, and Blair’s Grave. One evening the unusual beauty of the sky made her involuntarily drop her book. She gazed upward, and felt as if a book was open in heaven, where all the lovely and varying phenomena presented in living characters to her view the name of the Di-

vinity. There was a solemn congeniality between her feelings of her own state and the view of the declining day—the parting light and the approaching darkness. The glow of the western heaven was still resplendent and glorious; a little above, the blending hues of orange and azure were softening into a mellow and indefinite light; and in the upper region of the air, a delicious blue darkness invited the eye to repose in luxurious dimness; one star alone shewed its trembling head,—another and another, like infant births of light; and in the dark east the half-moon, like a bark of pearl, came on through the deep still ocean of heaven.

Eva gazed on; some tears came to her eyes; they were a luxury. Suddenly she felt as if she were quite well; a glow like that of health pervaded her whole frame—one of those indescribable sensations that seem to assure us of safety, while, in fact,

they are announcing dissolution. She imagined herself suddenly restored to health and happiness. She saw DeCourcy once more, as in their early hours of love, when his face was to her as if it had been the face of an angel; thought after thought came back on her heart like gleams of paradise. She trembled at the felicity that filled her whole soul; it was one of those fatal illusions, that disease, when it is connected with strong emotions of the mind, often flatters its victim with—that *mirage*, when the heart is a desert, which rises before the wanderer, to dazzle, to delude, and to destroy.

“It *is* an illusion,” she exclaimed, “but I will enjoy it. It is the last, and God,—yes God, will forgive me this last human feeling: He will forgive my shedding this last human tear. This *city of shelter*, may I not fly to it for a moment? is it not a little one, and my soul shall live?”

A fairy landscape glowed in her heart for a moment ; her withered youth, health, and passion bloomed again. It was that resurrection of the heart that we sometimes experience when we have long believed it dead. Eva glowed, trembled, wept once more, when she imagined no mortal object could draw another tear. Such gleams of soul sometimes brighten its twilight, even when the sun has gone down for ever and ever. Eva lingered on its rich and fading light ; lost in a reverie too nearly resembling insanity, she did not hear a noise among the leaves of the arbour where she sat, (unconscious where she was,)—it increased,—she started,—the noise seemed like that of a person bursting the branches of the withered liburnum. It was not a *stranger* foot—she knew the tread, and was fixed to the spot—*it was—no—it could not be—it was—*for his wasting arms were twined around her the next moment ; with all her

remaining strength she tore herself from
his grasp. * * * *

De Courcy fell at her feet.

CHAPTER VII.

By pain of heart, oft check'd and oft impell'd,
The intellectual power through words and things
Went sounding on, a dim and perilous way.

WORDSWORTH.

MADAME ST MAUR's mother died about the time De Courcy quitted France, and no obstruction remained to her union with her lover ; but these affectionate friends were too generous to be happy while Zaira was wretched. They forgot themselves, and seemed to live only for her. Their efforts were incessant, hopeless, and un-availing. They were not so absurd as to attempt consolation ; they tried to open new channels for her mind in every direc-

tion, but the stream would flow no longer. Paintings, sculptures, books, every intellectual luxury were in vain exhibited at De Viosmenil's villa. Every thing intended to interest Zaira, seemed only to increase her sufferings, and her miserable smile was latterly becoming worse than tears. When strong intellectual powers are combined with grief, the union is fatal. The shallow superficial characters of the world feel grief very lightly ; their tears are as easily wiped as they are shed ; to those who are accustomed to think deeply, grief is a fire that supplies its own fuel, and can continue to burn when all outward materials appear to be exhausted. Her friends had hoped that a recurrence to her former intellectual habits might have interested Zaira ; they were mistaken. Her former habits appeared to her like crimes, for they all came armed with reproaches ; what ceases to please us, appears to condemn us for our lost sense of their charms ;

and thus the wretched seem to themselves like the guilty, for they suffer almost the same pains, and dare not upbraid their accusers.

Zaira tried her former resources ; she weighed them in the balance, and found them wanting, as all in their hour of calamity must feel them. Books, paintings, music ; she tried them all—tried them with the remains of her former powers, but with no remains of her former enjoyment. The terrible, heart-annihilating thought ; the *cui bono* apathy of soul that we feel when the god of our earthly idolatry has quitted the shrine, rushed on her whenever she attempted to read, to think, to feel, to sing, or even to look on nature. These former friends of her heart seemed all turned against her ; she could not approach one of them, without feeling that they exclaimed, as with a living voice, “ to what purpose do you cultivate us *now* ? ” She had no answer ; she had once clasped them to

her heart, and cherished them there, and now they seemed to return her embrace with the stab of a smiling, beautiful, murderous *Arpega*. She shrunk away from their clasp, but the "iron had entered into her soul."

Conversation then became her only resource. The Scavans who frequented De Viosmenil's charming villa were eager to avail themselves of the distinction which her joining in their society gave it;—she gave it, but could not enjoy it. She mixed in society from an union of apathy and despair not unusual; a state of mind in which society may be a burthen, but solitude would be madness. She could no longer either communicate or receive; but she could bear the most frivolous sentiments better than her own thoughts. She could laugh with a facility that deceived those who had no penetration, but could not now shed a tear. Thus our misanthropy in-

creases in proportion with our inability to be alone ; and our dependence on society is never so great as when we thoroughly despise it.

Among the company that crowded to De Viosmenil's villa, the most constant was M. De Cardonneau, of whom already honourable mention has been made as an atheist, a wretch who had no more heart than creed—no more sensibility than principle. But he was a Scavan, was well received in society, had imposing manners, and a fluency on habitual topics ; he was a Macowen under a different dispensation, that was all. This man had been attached to Zaira for years, as a Frenchman is usually attached, with all the powers, not of his heart, or soul, or mind, but of his vanity, to which he would have sacrificed all mankind, if he could. In the hour of Zaira's eminence and prosperity he was proud to be admitted into her society ; and magnified his consequence by repeating her conversation to men, and

her costume to women, who were not honoured by a nearer approach.

When he heard of Zaira's misfortunes, his mind changed. He could not, like Leonora Di Galigai, pretend to exercise the power of a strong mind over a weak one ; but he knew that every mind is enfeebled by suffering. He *imagined*, too, that the natural excitability of the human heart might prepare hers for a new impression, while it was yet warm from the painful process of the former being effaced ; but, above all, he founded his hopes on her sufferings ; he knew (or, at least, he believed,) she had no religion to oppose to those sufferings, and on this he built his hopes. He conceived, that if her principles were destroyed, he might obtain influence over her intellects, if not over her feelings. Perhaps he wished to succeed, from the natural anxiety of infidelity to make proselytes. *Those who feel they are walking in darkness are glad of a companion.*

He had too much sense to commence the attack in the vulgar blasphemies of Paine, by calling Christ an impostor, and the apostles liars ; he tried to lead her into the wild labyrinth of metaphysics, and had little doubt of her losing herself, if he could once get her there. One evening, as she, De Viosmenil, and Cardonneau, were walking, the beauty of the stars, emerging in sparkling succession in the deep blue heaven, drew the eyes and thoughts of the party upwards. They were silent ; and De Viosmenil was pleased to observe the tranquillity of her expression.

“ It is impossible,” said Zaira, “ to look on those bright mansions, and not conceive them the abodes of bliss. ‘ Who dwell happy there ? ’ ”

“ None, probably, happier than the inhabitants of this planet,” said Cardonneau ; “ and if their lot resembles ours, they have no reason to complain of being incumbered with too much felicity. It is not probable

that all the sufferers in creation are crowded into this planet, that earth is the dungeon of the vast fabric of the universe. Evil probably is every where—probably it preponderates every where—I argue from analogy”—

“ And I from grief,” said Zaira, “ that forces us to look for relief to any place but that where we are condemned to feel it.”

“ Grief,” said Cardonneau, “ reproduces itself by its own fertility. Grief, driven to extremity, becomes the parent of hope,—hope produces delusion, and delusion brings us back to grief again.”

At these words, De Viosmenil, who saw Zaira silently wipe away a tear, called on them both to observe a beautiful meteor, and tried to engage Zaira by a description of a meteoric stone that had lately fallen in the neighbourhood. She tried to listen to him, but Cardonneau, who, like most other atheists, was very cowardly, retired into the house, dreading, perhaps, a similar explo-

sion, and not coveting the fate of Pliny. De Viosmenil smiled, and repeated to himself, "*Parcus Deorum cultor et infrequens, insanientis dum sapientiæ consultus erro, nunc—namque Diespiter igni corusco nubila dividens plerumque, per purum tonantes egit equos, volucremque currum.*"

There was a numerous company in the saloon. Zaira went to a window, drew aside the curtain, and sat alone gazing on the glorious night. Cardonneau approached softly; she did not perceive him; he overheard her repeating to herself, "God is love." He retreated—"If she is quoting from the Bible," thought the tempter, "this is no time for me."

A few moments after, when he hoped the religious effervescence had subsided, he ventured to approach again—"You no longer find society interesting," said he; "those men cannot any longer amuse you," pointing to a groupe of literary men who were conversing.

“ Il n’y a point *d’homme* pour celle qui aime,” said Zaira ; “ son amant est plus, tous les autres sont moins.”

He was rejoiced to hear her quote from Rousseau, and congratulated himself that half the work was done. “ You are fond of gazing on the night,” said he ; “ so am I. This lovely light is congenial to grief, the only permanent inmate of the human heart.”

“ It is congenial to a feeling more sublime and salutary,” said Zaira—“ to the hope of futurity. There is no sophistry in the stars ; those hieroglyphics, those sacred letters, traced by the finger of God, disclose more of his mind to man, than he can learn from the wisest of his fellow-mortals. I look there, and forget all you have said.”

“ I shall take care to refresh your memory, however,” said Cardonneau to himself. “ I have only said,” he added, “ what the stars, if they speak truth, can never contradict ; to gaze on the phenomena of na-

ture for a consolation of grief is harmless ; for grief is ‘ *high-fantastical* ;’ and whether it derives relief from the charms of nature or of society, is little matter, provided relief be obtained ; but to apply to those phenomena for a solution of the evils of life, and imagine, because the stars are bright, that their inhabitants are happy, is a wandering of intellect.”

“ *Malo cum Platone errare,*” said Zaira, forcing a smile ; “ if my philosophy be false, it is at least more comfortable than yours.”

“ I congratulate you on its comforts,” said Cardonneau, drily.

“ And do you believe, then, I should feel happier, if I believed, like you, the universal predominance of evil ?” said Zaira.

“ If truth be an approach to happiness, you certainly would.”

“ Lead me then to happiness your own way, if it must be,” said Zaira, with a melancholy smile. “ The general predominance

of evil cannot be disputed ; pain mashes us into life, pain attends us through it, and pain at length opens for us the gates of the grave : but it is often rendered supportable (nay enviable) by mental energy ; and physical evil may thus even be productive of moral good."

" Physical and moral evil are separated only in the dreams of theory," said Cardonneau. " They are closely allied in the experience of life ; severe bodily sufferings often produce the fiercest exacerbations of mind ; want makes men murderers and robbers. I would not give much for the morality of famine. Ugolino would have cut my throat to give his children a meal. When Louis XIV. laid waste the Palatinate, or his Irish general (worthy of his master) drove all the population of the adjacent country under the walls of Londonderry, to starve in the sight of their countrymen, who could not assist them, don't you imagine that many of the sufferers were driven

to all the extremities of rage, blasphemy, and despair, who might have been very moral men, but for their physical sufferings? Do you conceive that they sat down, naked and famishing among snows, to console themselves with the thought of the moral good to be deduced from their circumstances?"

"To state extreme cases as *examples* may be admissible," said Zaira; "but it can scarcely be so to adduce them as general principles in argument."

"They are not extreme cases," said Cardonneau; "those wretches whom we call kings, intoxicated by the power of diffusing misery, (which man always mistakes for real power) have always rendered such cases rather common than extreme. Look at history—what is it but a loathsome and wearying repetition of one man, or community of men, wresting the rod of power from the hands of another to convert it into a scourge for the weak?"

Cardonneau was proceeding to examples, for he piqued himself on his powers of declamation, and certainly there was an ample field for them here ; but Zaira interrupted him.

“ Crime and evil are generally public, both from their nature and their consequences,” said she ; “ but the very modesty of virtue prevents its notoriety. There is something very dramatic in evil ; we dwell long on the description of a storm or a pestilence ; but who can fill his imagination with the idea of days without a cloud, or write a diary of health that knows no interruption ? Volumes have been filled with the details of human misery ; but who ever wrote a book to tell mankind he was happy ? Happiness is a single, perhaps an incommunicable sentiment ; but grief is inexhaustibly fertile and eloquent.”

“ The very circumstance of the greater abundance of the details of calamity should

prove its greater quantum in life," said Cardonneau.

"Perhaps not," replied Zaira; "grief, compelled to look abroad for consolation or compassion, must try to procure them by a description of its sufferings; while happiness requires only consciousness, and stands in no need of witnesses. Were we to form the true estimate of life, it should be taken from man, not as he is represented in history, where all his worst feelings are brought into action, but as he exists in domestic life, where his best are generated and cultivated."

"I fear," said Cardonneau, "if we had the power, like le Diable Boiteux, to take off the roof of every man's house and look in, we should find ample confirmation of the predominance of evil. Man, in the struggles of public life, may be criminal, but is rarely contemptible—his vices, like the stage on which they are exhibited, are *great*—but in domestic life the sufferings

are wholly without grandeur, and our disgust at meanness is only added to our horror of depravity. Could we look into the cottage of the peasant with as much facility as their conspicuous station enables us to view the palaces of princes, we should find the same intrigue, vanity, envy, and selfishness struggling for interest and for power in the narrowest circle of domestic life, as ever was read of in courts and cabinets—and the history of the humblest individual for a single day, including the petty subjects of domestic strife—the eager pursuits of forbidden indulgence—the vain attempts of the aged to maintain power over rebellious youth—and the fierce struggles of premature manhood for early emancipation—the plots of brothers and sisters to obtain an exclusive share of parental partiality—or the dangerous and wicked preference of a parent for one child, perhaps the most worthless of all—the wars and rumours of wars, in one single day, un-

der one roof, ay, in one room—if we could see it—would leave us little reason to suppose that evil was confined to the greater events and more prominent characters of life.—Perhaps,” said he, pursuing the point with increasing eagerness from its anticipated effect on Zaira’s peculiar feelings—“perhaps if any part of life might be supposed more free from the predominant influence of evil than another, it would be that of the liberal and cultivated man of letters.”—(Zaira sighed, and the atheist caught a good omen from her sigh ; he determined, however, to sketch the portrait at a safe distance, and leave it to her contemplation.)—“ *A man*,” he continued, “who has studied books and nature ; who has learned from historical examples to correct or avoid the evils of life ; and who, while he is laying up stores of moral wisdom for the regulation of his conduct, is also led by the very habit of study into a course of rational and elegant enjoyment—

or, if such a case be too rare, let us imagine *a man*, (he was on his guard,) devoted to some beautiful art, that occupies his heart, his hands, and his time—whose life is passed in vicissitudes of pleasing toil, or of public triumph—in whose favour the curse pronounced on mankind seems to be reversed—whose devotion to his darling employment enables him to eat his bread, not in the sweat of his brow, but with almost as much pleasure, from the bare labour of his hands, as its consummation gives to the delighted spectator.—Well, may not such men be happy? may they not set life at defiance? may they not at least contrive to cheat it of a smile? the wisest and rarest art ever practised. Let facts speak. Facts proclaim loudly, too loudly, to leave an excuse to the wilful deafness of human pride, or human negligence, that philosophers, and poets, and artists are universally known to be the most irritable, restless, and jealous of mankind; and while their works breathe

the most exalted sentiments, and the most enchanting descriptions, and furnish the most exquisite representations of nature, physical or impassioned; and while the reader, or *spectator*, imagines, that the being who could write or feel, or even *paint* thus, must be half in Heaven,—that being is an utter stranger to the delights he can communicate so copiously and so richly, and sits in his study or school, stung by neglect, if unnoticed; mad with vanity, if popular; tremblingly dependent on, and meanly canvassing for the praise he affects to despise; and frantic with rage or with envy against the competitors, whom he damns with faint praise, or writhing with bitterer agony, pretends to disdain.”——

“All intellectual persons,” said Zaira, collecting her broken voice, and forcing herself to continue the debate from the mere *orphaned* feeling of misery, from a determination to support this “bald disjointed talk,” lest the improvident kindness of

friends might haply touch another, a feeling like that of the Countess of Rousillon, when she said to her clown,—‘ Well, sir, for want of other foolery, I’ll bide your proof.’ All intellectual persons are not thus degraded; I have appeared in public, and my success never was attended by one pang of jealousy.”

“ Because you were superior to it,” said Cardonneau, “ not only from the eminent *distinction* of your talents, but from your goodness of heart.”

That was the worst point of his argument. Zaira shuddered at a compliment now;—any thing that reminds us of our former existence, when the *spring* and the hope of it are lost, appears like a mixture of insult and reproach. Cardonneau felt in a moment he was on a wrong tack, and shifted with instantaneous and admirable dexterity. “ We must allow,” said he, (*il faut avouer*, the language a Frenchman uses

when, by dint of idiom, he is passing his own assertions for general truths,)—"We must allow that human expectations should be reduced to a very low standard indeed ; but can our expectations be ever brought so low as reality brings them ? Let us rate the estimate of life as low as we can bring it, health, peace, and competence at least must be items in the sum—to enjoy peace and comfort in any reasonable degree, or indeed in any degree at all, (and that is no very high demand,) we must certainly be exempt from all fear of wanting food for the day, and shelter for the night. Compared to this distress, all intellectual agitation is a farce, and all impassioned feeling a fever. But is this exemption enjoyed by ten out of twenty ? No, not perhaps by five ; no, (taking the ordinary vicissitudes of life into account) not *by one*. What multitudes are there whose sole occupation is to labour every day for the bread that must be every day consumed, and even on this hard con-

dition, how many are there who cannot obtain it? What multitudes are there who cannot procure at the doors of their own houses a share of the alms which they distributed with their own hands to mendicants but a short space before? But granting even, (what experience forbids us to grant) that competence includes the whole of life, is man then reduced to place his happiness in living a life like that of the beasts that perish, satisfied with daily food and nightly shelter? That man cannot have the heart of man who can crawl through life without a single tie of nature or of passion, —without any thing to love beside himself, —who can crouch into his hovel and munch his sordid morsel in brutal silence, satisfied that he has enough to pretracht his worthless existence while the many perish."

"Such a picture is horrid," said Zaira; "but" (and her voice trembled as she continued the sentence) "has nature no ties?"

Has passion no charms? May not many sufferings be diminished or forgotten *if we love much?*"

"And if we do," said Cardonneau, eager to catch his victim in her own snare, "on how frail a foundation is even this palliative of misery placed? If the object is human, it must be transient."

Tears fell fast from Zaira's eyes at these words; and Cardonneau, whose object and hope were to make her not feel, hastened on to generalities. "Disease may corrode, age must decay it, death must remove it; and even while the objects we love remain with us, they may be so changed by the changes of life,—so altered by absence,—so withered by misfortune,—so parched and blasted by those winds that are for ever traversing the deserts of life, that we may find them likely to contribute to any thing but our happiness.—No, they are spared only to make us feel them drop, grain by grain,

from our agonizing hands, and to learn it is only sand we have grasped after all."

There was a long pause, till Zaira, collecting rather her feelings than her powers of reasoning, said,—“ What is your object in thus pressing on the mind the predominance of evil, as if it were a salvatory clause in the creed of humanity? What interest can any human being have in disclosing to another views that must blast the sight? Revelation has assured us that ‘ God is love ;’ and this single sentence, if we believe it, furnishes a refutation of all your arguments, or a consolation.”

“ Revelation,” said Cardonneau, who was a very well-bred atheist, “ is doubtless entitled to profound respect ; but we may be pardoned, if we refuse to surrender to that respect the evidences of our senses, the suggestions of our reason, the experience of our lives. We are told that ‘ God is love ;’ but we must look abroad for the proof,

which must be sought in his works. In the creation of that Being who is *love*, we find nothing but hatred and hostility; the circumstances of man both physical and moral; his nature as a savage, or his habits when civilized; the passions of his heart, or the institutions of society; the very elements themselves; the earth on which he treads convulsed by storms; the air that he breathes impregnated by pestilence—all seem sworn against the happiness of man; and if he obtains a short respite from these, his fellow-creatures are perpetual instruments of perpetually-recurring wretchedness; or place him alone, the very abstraction from struggle and difficulty, the very lassitude which that abstraction generates, is the most horrible sensation of all. Man becomes his own enemy then, his inanity is the worst of agonies, and, like the scorpion, he darts into himself that sting, which has no longer an enemy to pierce, and perishes by his own

poison. Amid such a world (his creation), where shall we recognize the 'God of love?' Is it not obvious, beautiful and intelligent Zaira, that if our creed, if our national *mythology*, intimated that an evil spirit had created the earth, and was permitted to amuse his malignity by the sufferings of its inhabitants, that we could expect no worse results than we daily witness or experience?"

"You make me shudder," said Zaira, rising hastily; "your expressions tremble on the verge of blasphemy."

"What is blasphemy?" said Cardonneau, rising also, and following her. "In ancient Athens or Rome, it would have been denying the divinity of Jupiter; in Constantinople, decrying the impostor Mahomet; in Madrid, speaking against the power of the Inquisition; or in Widah, that of the Great Serpent."

Cardonneau was glad to take shelter for

the time in these bewildering generalities, as the divers in the gulph of Ormus, when they see fish approaching to devour them, try to escape by raising the mud with their feet.

The next day Cardonneau was laid up with a severe toothach. De Viosmenil sat in his room for nearly an hour, during which time the conversation ran in its usual channel; Cardonneau talking the whole time like an atheist, or, in his own phrase, *en philosophe*.

At last, De Viosmenil, weary of him and his subject, rose to depart.

“ Ah, stay !” said Cardonneau, announcing in the same breath defiance of God and dependence on man—“ Stay a little longer ; I am in horrible pain ; stay, and if philosophy displeases you, I will talk *tres religieusement*.”

De Viosmenil was not tempted to stay, even by this promise.

The next day the toothach had ceased, and Cardonneau was able to talk blasphemy as well as ever.

CHAPTER VIII.

Of good and evil much they argued then ;
Of happiness and final misery,
Passion and apathy, and glory and shame—
Vain wisdom all, and false philosophy.

MILTON.

ZAIRA was in no mood to hear him. She had felt deeply her deficiency in the argument the preceding evening, and was anxious to supply it, before she was again called on to controversy. In grief, the mind is very apt to blame itself; it acquires a species of irritability, which it is disposed to vent even at its own expense—a kind of suicidal hostility. We imagine we cannot too much punish the heart that has cost us so much.

Zaira now blamed herself for not having studied the evidences of revealed religion in her happier hours, though she felt that those hours presented little motive for such studies. Idolized and flattered then, she was contented with a general admission of abstract truths, and even gave herself much credit for thinking so well of the other world, while the present was full of charms and honours—it was a kind of fair-weather religion, fit for the happy—but now that the storm came on, she was forced to look to the tackle of the threatened vessel, and see whether it was fit to ride out the gale. Grief certainly leads more to think of religion than joy does. Singular phenomenon of the human mind! One would imagine that the effusion of gratitude was as natural as the supplication for support: It is not so however, for the reading-desks in our churches are loaded with requests to pray for the sick, and there is scarcely ever an acknowledgment of gratitude from the

convalescent, though there is an appropriate form for each. As in the days of Christ, of the nine cleansed, only one returns to give glory. Thus, joy leads us to communion with man, who can share it ; and grief to communion with God, who alone can relieve it.—Which is best ?

Zaira betook herself to study the evidences of religion with a kind of satisfaction derived from the feeling that it was *her duty*. Oh how soon, when unhappy, we fly to *duties* as a kind of atonement ; how closely are the ideas of suffering and guilt connected in all human minds !

Zaira was unfortunate in undertaking this study in France, where there is a “plentiful scarcity” of such works. She enquired in vain for Stillingfleet’s “*Origines Sacræ*,” for Leland’s “*Account of Deistical Writers*,” for Browne’s “*Answer to Shaftesbury*,” for the masterly work of Paley on the “*Evidences of Christianity*,” and that of her living countryman, Murray,

(one of the best of them all). No such books could be had—nothing but Chateaubriant, and his “Genie du Christianisme,” (so called) a frivolous, superficial, gaudy, *French* work, reminding us perpetually of the necessity of condoling with the angels, who, we are told by Shakespeare, weep when men “play such fantastic tricks before high Heaven.” What could Zaira make of a writer who substitutes for a proof of the Trinity an illusion drawn from the *threefold appearance of the sun, at his rising, meridian, and setting?* She toiled on through floods of eloquent nonsense; and *les femmes Scavantes*, who visited at Viosmenil’s villa, looked over her shoulder as she read, exclaimed, “Monsieur Chateaubriant! Ah qu’il est charmant!” and tried to apply to the author of “Genie du Christianisme” the pun of a Frenchwoman on the title of Montesquieu’s work, who said, “*L’Esprit des loix*,” should have been “*Esprit sur les loix*.”

All this did Zaira no good; she was

wearyed to death by Monsieur Chateaubriant ; there was no standing his

“ Cages for gnats, and chains to yoke a flea,
Dried butterflies, and *tomes* of casuistry.”

POPE.

When under the power of strong emotion, nothing but *truth* can satisfy the soul. When the unhappy Dodd was going to execution, he exclaimed, “ All will be *real* in a few moments ! ” We pant for this reality in grief, for we feel that half our sufferings have been owing to illusion. Zaira began to wish to hear the worst that could be said on the other side—dangerous curiosity ! Like Pilate, she could have asked, “ What is truth ? ” a question to which no answer was returned, doubtless because it was asked in presumption or impatience. This restlessness, however, was owing to her sufferings.

When our minds are at peace ; when we are at ease in our possessions ; when we

are "settled on our lees," we are disposed to be very well satisfied with the present state of things—the national religion and the church as by law established, all included—and we are ready to raise an outcry against those who seek to disturb us. But misfortune forces us to dig to the foundations, and we toil hard, and dive deep, if we may indeed find a drop of water to cool the flames that are devouring our very souls.

The next time they conversed, Cardonneau was more on his guard. He remembered she had been shocked by some of his former expressions; he watched himself. "Peu a peu," said Cardonneau to himself, "if I can get her to confess that she is thoroughly miserable, it will be easy enough to lead her to throw the blame of it from herself on the Deity; and a Deity that has once come to be blamed is good for nothing ever after. Oh, if I can get her to that! then"——

“ So spake the spirited sly snake ;” and he began his next meditated attack more and more *en philosophe* ; he spoke of Christianity as of something he wished well to, and was willing to treat with lenity. He spoke of it like one making the best of a bad cause, and wishing, *with all his sincere soul*, that it was a better one. “ God defend me from my friends,” says some intelligent Frenchman, “ and I will take care of my enemies.”

He began his circumvallations far and wide, like a skilful besieger ; the garrison must have had supernatural sight to descry his approaches. He lamented the *prevalence of evil*, like one who was humanely lamenting human calamity, not metaphysically searching into its causes. Zaira, in the impatient agony of a wounded spirit, tried to call him back to the subject. He appeared to submit to her commands, executed an incomparable French shrug, and performed, with eloquent circumlocution and admira-

ble colloquial navigation, a kind of coasting voyage round and round the forbidden shore, without ever touching on one of its dangerous bearings. This would not do for Zaira; she went straight to the point, to the *origin* of evil, that tremendous rock, against which the human mind may lie beating till it becomes a wreck. Cardonneau appeared to listen with a kind of deferential reluctance, and confessed the subject beyond his comprehension.

“ It has occurred to me,” said Zaira, “ when I have thought on the subject, that evil is owing to the necessary imperfection of created beings. Divinity alone is perfect; every created being may fall, how far depends on himself; and thus evil may be perpetually generated by what constitutes the essential difference between the Creator and the created, the want of absolute and infallible perfection on the part of the latter.”

“ That is plausible,” said Cardonneau, with the air of a man who wishes to be

convinced, " but it cannot account for the predominance of evil in the creation—the end of the Deity in creation would be frustrated—It would reduce the whole system to a God, and a universe of demons—a monstrous and frightful hypothesis. Even your great English philosopher,* in his observations on Soame Jennings's foolish pamphlet, confesses, ' we can easily conceive how evil comes into the world, but we cannot so easily conceive why there is so much of it, or why there might not be less.' If you were introduced into the house of a man, remarkable for his placidity and philanthropy, and who was perpetually announcing his wish to make his family happy, would you not be surprised at finding every head bent down, and every eye filled with tears, to hear on every side the wailings of wretchedness and discontent—

* Dr Johnson.

in effect, to witness as much misery as could be inflicted by a domestic tyrant, or suffered by his dependants?"

"Not if their sufferings arose from themselves," said Zaira. "The master of a family is not answerable for the wilful misconduct of his children and domestics."

"That is the disadvantage of arguing from metaphor," said Cardonneau; "the features in the resemblance are only incidental, no man is *created* a servant,—in the original they are essential, for *every man is born a sufferer*, physically or mentally, or both *perhaps—both certainly*."

Through this "war of words" Zaira fought her way, and she endeavoured to make it plain that nine-tenths of human sufferings are owing to the agent himself; and her heart supplied her with that terrible eloquence of experience, before which all eloquence is dumb or is weak.

"You are mocking human wretchedness," said Cardonneau, "when you speak

thus, 'when you describe the misery of man as arising from himself—does it not in a million of cases arise from circumstances over which man has no controul; from habit, from national institutions, from national religion, from power in unjust hands? Could the Helots be happy in Sparta?—Could Galileo be happy in the dungeons of the Inquisition?—Could Regulus be happy in his tub?—Could Latimer and Ridley and Hooper be happy when the fresh, green,* *slow-burning* wood was kindled round their shrinking, scorching limbs?"

He had gone too far; he was treading on hallowed ground—ground unfit for him to touch; he had not put off his mortal sandals when he ventured to approach it. Zaira seized the point with all the powers of her imagination.

* Vide Hume's History of England.

"Yes," said she, her beautiful face flushed for a moment, as if it reflected the flames in which the martyrs perished,—“Yes, they were happy—they suffered for the truth, and they went to God—Yes, they were happy—and their happiness, amid the most horrible extreme of physical suffering, disproves the argument that human misery depends on external causes.”

Cardonneau felt his hopes sink within him at these words—they indicated religious feeling—he was aghast—a new enemy had started up—he knew not what to make of her; *Zaira*, declaiming in the tone of “Taylor and the Book of Martyrs!” Then, with rapid *French* penetration, he conceived all this was said *pour facon*, and he shifted directly. He appeared like a man who had listened merely to declamation, and was waiting to finish *his* sentence when the interruption was over.

“I was going,” said he, with an air of patient deference, “I was going to men-

tion causes, barely physical, as productive of human misery—(there he thought he was safe)—climate, for instance. When Nature is armed against man, (as she is over three-fourths of the globe,) what defence can he make, and what consolation can he seek? No man can be an agent in being born in a particular climate; it can neither be matter of choice or of blame: yet how much of human happiness or misery depends on the degree of latitude in which we exist."

Zaira, no longer able to rely on her imagination; on the unprompted facility of a happy mind, that pours out its conceptions and images with felicitous and unlaboured luxuriance, was now searching her memory for something to oppose to his argument. She felt it to be false, but had not spirit now to encounter it in the abstract; she tried to shelter herself under particular instances of opposition. She spoke of Iceland, a country that seems to have incurred

the wrath of all the elements ; a country of fire and frost, the *Cain of inanimate nature*, branded and rejected and set apart from its species. " Yet in this country," said Zaira, " literature is cultivated to a degree unknown in the most delicious regions ; and a woman is not suffered to marry till a priest furnishes a certificate of her being able to read, and being acquainted with the poetical histories of the island."

" A solitary instance is no argument," said Cardonneau ; " I appeal to the 'general state of the universe ; its physical circumstances are such as to exclude a majority of its inhabitants from the bare participation of comfort, (Cardonneau was obliged to naturalize an English word)—What is the state of the inhabitants of the Orkneys, of Lapland, of Siberia ? Does not the mere climate under which they live condemn the natives to a state below that of intellectual beings,—to a state little above that of the animals whom they destroy for

the support of their miserable existence, or the uncouth furniture of their den-like huts?"—(And as he spoke, Cardonneau rapidly turned over a superb collection of engravings illustrative of the *costume* of the inhabitants of the north of Europe.) "Perhaps," said he, "the most miserable feature in the situation of these *Parias of humanity*, is that their bare representation furnishes a subject of wonder and curiosity to their more enlightened fellow-creatures; that we are gazing at them this moment as we would at the figures of animals in some wild remote country, and blessing ourselves that no such monsters are indigenous to our soil."

He went on in the triumph of his soul, and he spoke of the Boshiesmen, near the Cape of Good Hope, and of the Albinos, and of the men mentioned by Locke (in his Quixotic combat with the wind-mill giants of *innate ideas*), who had no name for a spiritual being, and can reckon no further than

their fingers, (offering their hairs as a substituted symbol for a number beyond five;) and he was still going on, when it occurred to him, (though a Frenchman,) that a woman must be allowed one moment to speak.

“All your positions,” said Zaira, “tend to prove that misery is the lot of those who have not attained intellectual cultivation. *If lions could paint,*” she continued, trying to exert her former pleasantry—she failed in the attempt. An internal monition,—a blow on the heart struck her at the moment,—she struggled with it,—struggled vainly, and burst into tears. Cardonneau was instantly and intently employed in *examining the engravings*. Zaira dried her tears, and went on with the conversation, “as well as she might.”

“Do not imagine,” said Cardonneau, “that I absurdly ascribe all the sufferings of man to the climate he lives under. He has more enemies than Nature. But where the tyranny of the elements ceases, that of

his fellow-men commences. A being who is enabled, by the progress of society, to construct a habitation that will defend him from their inclemency, to furnish it with what may contribute to his comforts, and to be within the reach of all that he may want, from being surrounded by other men and their habitations, is certainly a being of much less privations and physical suffering than the savage; but then he has sold his liberty for his indulgence. From that moment, he becomes liable to all the evils of society, viciously constituted;—he must fight in a cause that he is neither interested about, or conscientiously justified in, if his rulers please;—he must march to cut the throats of men he has never seen, at the command of one for whom he does not care;—he must submit to have his property drained by taxation, to support schemes which even those who devise them do not understand. And even supposing him exempt from the prescriptive evils of politi-

cally-constituted society, he must submit to all the *evils of opinion*, the false standard of morals and manners perpetually erected in society by those who take on them to be arbiters of its internal structure ;—dissimulation must be his study, and hypocrisy his pride. He must for ever smile on those he hates, and often look coldly on those he loves ; his joy must be art, and his very grief affectation. Is such a state more enviable than that of the savage ? Or rather, does it not often combine the sufferings of savage life, hunger, cold, and nakedness, (for many have perished for want in civilized society,) with the evils of a sophisticated mind, artificial manners, and all the luxurious impotence of a vitiated debility ?”

“ The end of your commonwealth forgets the beginning,” said Zaira, forcing a faint smile. “ You began by proving the miseries of savage life, and you end by proving the superior wretchedness of civilized life.”

"I have only supported my general argument," said Cardonneau, "by demonstrating the essential and predominant wretchedness of both."

"But," said Zaira, who saw the use he was going to make of this point when he had established it, "Is it fair to charge on the destiny of man those evils of which he himself is the author? Are not more than half the sufferings of life wilfully inflicted by man on himself? Is not disease owing to intemperance, and is not mental wretchedness the result of ungoverned passion?"

"Are the diseases of infants, which often continue to affect the constitution through life, the consequence of intemperance?" said Cardonneau; "and is not the cureless malady of a broken heart a suffering always inflicted by others, from whom we have perhaps deserved better?" Zaira, struggling with the feelings roused by this appeal, was unable to answer,--

“ The tempter saw his time, the work he plied.”

“ We are born,” said he, “ with a constitution the prey of disease, and with a mind the victim of passions—Are we agents in either? We are not the cause of our own existence, though we are inevitable sufferers by the consequence.” (He turned quickly, and with an air of *inconsequence*, to a book that lay on the table,—he had marked and doubled down the passage for the purpose that morning ; it was Lord Valentia’s ‘Travels, and he turned to a strong description of a storm which the author witnessed in the East Indies ;—darkness was over all the land for hours. The business of life was suspended—fear froze the soul of every man, prince and slave,—one person died of mere actual terror.) “ This person,” said Cardonneau, “ was not a voluntary agent in his own sufferings and horrible death. He might have been a mild, benevolent, inoffensive being :

most probably he was; such persons are often constitutionally timid. Yet, can we imagine a death more hideous and dismal, on the rack, or at the stake, than a death caused by mere terror? Recollect also, that this feeling could not be powerful enough to cause his dissolution without having been the inmate of his heart and nature for years;—he must all his life-long have been in bondage to it;—he must have felt every day that ‘fear which hath torment;’—he must for ever have been dependent on the “beggarly elements;”—when ever he rose in the morning he gazed on the atmosphere with anxious wretchedness, to know whether he was to pass the day in torture. Every passing cloud, every rising breeze, every whirl of dust was like the minister of death to his soul;—under this burthen of existence he lingered, writhed, and died. Can more consummate misery be imagined? No tyrant has it in his power to inflict any thing like this; yet there was

no guilt here, I mean no guilt connected with such sufferings. He was not answerable for the gathering of the clouds, or the dispersion of the dust that filled the air for forty miles. Nor was one deviseable purpose, even in reference to a future state, to be answered by this wretch's expiring under feelings that might have made him envy a martyr in the fire. Sufferings we are told are intended to make us better; but what benefit, here or hereafter, could be derived from his? Were his virtues exalted, or his love of the Deity inflamed by such a state of feeling?—I trow not."

"If suffering does not purify us," said Zaira, "it is our own fault."

"You do not speak as you feel," said Cardonneau.

Zaira could only weep in answer.

"Nothing can be more absurd," said Cardonneau, "than to talk of the beneficial effect of suffering—nothing can be more contrary to experience. The pride of

the ancients enabled them to defy it, or to talk as if they did—which comes to the same thing with the readers. And the peculiar theology of Christians has taught them to speak of the benefit of sufferings; but they are obliged to take all on credit, and draw on futurity for what time cannot afford to pay them. But look to life, not to theory; look not to what men *should* do, but to what they really *are* doing. Experience teaches that sufferings, whether physical or mental, so far from acting as emollients on the heart and passions, tend generally to embitter the one, and exasperate the other. Is there any place where less patience is to be found than in an hospital? How many pious ejaculations are wafted in the curses, groans, and inarticulate imprecations of a field of battle? Grief itself, though more refined in its expression, is not less hostile. Grief, violent grief, generally at first vents itself in blasphemy,

and then sinks into a kind of querulous sullenness."

" You have spoken only of suffering," said Zaira ; " you have yet to mention what ample resources a cultivated intellect can oppose to pain. All that the mind can suffer, the mind, properly armed, can also repel."

" That is the false language of a theorist," said Cardonneau ; " the language of one who has reached the top of the house by help of a ladder, and then draws it up after him, and bids the gazers below follow him at their leisure. When we speak of intellectual resources, of the oil which they effuse over the storms of life, we should recollect that those resources are in the power of a very few. The Deity, we are told, has declared, that in the sweat of man's brow he shall eat his bread ; and certainly he has kept his word. The bare care of providing for subsistence, for food for the

day that is passing over them, occupies about nine-tenths of our species. What time, what opportunity have they for intellectual improvement, or philosophical discussion? I grant that an enlarged mind can reason evil almost out of its nature, certainly out of its power, but what means have savages and slaves to attain enlargement of mind? (and all men are either savages or slaves.) The wild naked wanderer on the banks of Senegal, or of the Lake Ontario, who rises at the break of day to obtain with his bow and arrow provision for the day; and 'the pale artist who plies the sickly trade,' in a close shop in the unwholesome streets of Paris or of London, are bound down by the same yoke of necessity—they must toil daily to live daily—their thoughts must be of the earth, earthly. What can enlarged intellect do for them, but mock their misery by objects of hopeless and impossible attainment? They may form subjects of specu-

lation to a philosopher, but can they ever hope to be philosophers themselves?"

He paused—Zaira was silent ; he went on with irresistible eagerness, with all the eloquence of vice, more eloquent than virtue, because more in need of rhetorical support, and trusting its cause chiefly to words. He went on successfully—we spare our readers his arguments. The sum of them was this :—Either there is no God, or, if there is, he is a Being wholly insensible to human actions and their consequences. The predominance of evil in creation is irreconcilable with the idea of the *active* presidency of a benevolent Being ; it intimates either a want of power, or a want of will, to remove that evil which defaces creation, and (in the apprehension of all finite judgments) frustrates the object of the Creator. Now Omnipotence cannot be charged with want of power ; want of will, therefore, or the want of essential benevolence in the nature of the

Deity, is the next conclusion ; but there is something so frightful and appalling in this that atheism itself seems a relief to it.

“ Must atheism be my refuge then ? ” said Zaira, pausing at the brink of the precipice to which he had led her, and viewing the blackness of the gulph beneath, immeasurable, impenetrable. “ Is this the region, this the soil, the clime ? ” said then the lost archangel.

“ The alternative is necessary,” said Cardonneau.

“ And tremendous,” added Zaira—and she retired to do the worst thing she could—to deliberate on it.

That evening there was a numerous company at De Viosmenil's ; he had observed her lately, and feared she was listening too much to Cardonneau ; he sought to divide her attention by numbers. The evening was so serene and beautiful that some of the company were dispersed through the gardens, while the rest were seated in

a saloon, whose large glass doors opened on it, and which was illuminated only by the bright moon, thus they appeared to be together ; the same pure element was respired and enjoyed by both, whether in the saloon or garden.

In France, nothing is more usual than the discussion of abstract questions on the most important subjects. The company, as they wandered through the gardens, spoke of the immortality of the soul, and the being of a God, with the perfect ease of continental latitudinarianism. The scene, and the conversation, brought strongly to the recollection of Zaira that resplendent passage in Tacitus that precedes the account of the death of Thræsea, “ Tum ad Thræseam, *in hortis agentem*, quæstor consulis missus, advesperascente jam die. Inlustrum virorum fæminarumque cœtus frequentes egerat, maxime intentus Demetrio, Cynicæ institutionis doctore, cum quo, ut conjectare erat intentione vultus et auditis (si qua clarius proloquebantur,) de

naturâ animæ et dissociatione spiritus corporisque inquirebat, donec advenit Domitius Cæcilianus," &c. She repeated these lines to Cardonneau, who observed, that the ancients, at least, possessed the advantage of a free discussion of the most awful subjects that the mind of man can admit or contemplate. "In modern society," said he, "we are 'hedged up unto the faith;' revealed religion has done so much for us, that we have no discoveries to make for ourselves; and if we had, we dare not—orthodoxy stops our mouths at every turn; the empire of the ocean of futurity is possessed by a mighty power, who does not suffer a single bark to sail on a voyage of discovery. In Greece they managed matters much better."

"Not in Greece, surely," said De Viosmenil, "where they persecuted Anaxagoras for teaching the elements of the Copernican system, with as much virulence as the Inquisition, centuries after, persecuted Galileo for the same crime, and where

Socrates was put to death for introducing *Kairós* *Θεός*. When you speak of liberality, my friend, forget that the ancients existed."

"The liberty of conversation they certainly allowed, and encouraged," said Cardonneau; "and I cannot but think that the Dialogue of Thræsea and Demetrius was a much better induction to the death of a rational being discussing those sublime subjects, when he is just on the point of proving the truth or the falsehood of his arguments, than the manner in which we prepare for it—a darkened chamber, closed curtains, tiptoe attendants, silent friends, and the hireling prayers of an ecclesiastical pedant."

Zaira's attention was drawn away by some of the company coming in from the garden, and concluding their debates on "fixed fate, free-will, foreknowledge absolute," by proposing to try the *sortes Virgilianæ*—Singular vacillation of the human mind between scepticism and the blindest credulity!

Cardonneau said it was perfectly natural—that the restless pain of the human mind was for ever impelling it to make these wide excursions, and traverse the whole extent of intellectual space between the frigid zone of infidelity and the torrid one of superstition.—“It is a pity it does not rest in the temperate one of religion at last,” said De Viosmenil. The company were now learning their fate from the pages of Virgil. Zaira looked on; she involuntarily remembered that night in Dublin when she had tried them—and when she was called on to follow the example of the rest, she shrunk away. She saw Cardonneau’s smile of derision, and, ashamed of having incurred, or encountered it, she advanced timidly. It was a singular accident, that this evening also she should open on a passage equally significant,—

“Tunc vero infelix, fatis exterrita Dido,
Mortem orat, tædet cœli convexa tueri.”

She stood aghast; it seemed as if the finger of Heaven was writing her destiny even on a page that she opened by accident. De Viosmenil tried to divert her attention by repeating the often-repeated remark on the ignorance of astronomy, so obvious in the expression "*coeli convexa*." He felt in a moment the attempt was vain. Cardonneau repeated almost audibly, "Another *Æneas* may be found."

Zaira retired at these words, which intimated more of Cardonneau's mind than he had yet ventured to shew—she retired to think, but not of him. She surveyed her splendid apartment with a melancholy air; flowers were there, whose fragrance she was no longer sensible of—books, which she no longer enjoyed, or indeed understood—her harp was there, which she never touched. These instruments of pleasure are a perpetual reproach to us when we are under the influence of grief; we try to transfer the reproach to them, and complain that they have lost the

power of pleasing, because we dread to tell ourselves that we have ceased to be pleased. She turned from them all in infinite, unspeakable loathing of soul. She threw herself beside the window, and gazed long on the lovely moon ; the objects of nature always suggest or cherish a delicious melancholy ; their very silence appears a kind of speechless consolation to the unfortunate ; “ there is no language, but a voice is heard among them.” The objects of art, on the contrary, always present themselves as ministers of pleasure, and insult us by their presence, when they become only the remembrances of sensations which they no longer excite, but by the force of contrast.

Zaira sat long at the window ; the clock struck two,—all was hushed in the house. The beauty of the night seemed increased and confirmed by this suspension of all human existence. No one spoke, moved, or breathed. There was a kind of spiritual glo-

ry in the light and in the hour. The wretched Zaira, parched by that fever of the soul, whose thirst no water on earth can be found to quench, quitted her room and wandered into the garden. The garden seemed too confined for her ; her heart burned within her ; the atheistical sentiments of Cardonneau had taken strong hold of her mind ; her philosophical religion made but a poor defence against them. Grief took their part with terrible power ; yes, grief, that irresistibly impels the mind to the extreme either of religion or of scepticism. A mediocrity of religion is not suited to a strong crisis of feeling. She found a kind of miserable relief in plunging into the darkness of atheism—religion had not light enough for her—it must be a mild habitual light, to whose benign diffusion we have long been accustomed, before we can participate in its comforts—but absolute scepticism furnishes us with a sudden desperate promise of relief. There are no gradations, no pre-

paratory steps; we rush into it, and attain a horrible sullen repose.

Perhaps there were other causes that influenced Zaira in the present state of her mind;—in grief we certainly do not wish to ascribe our sufferings to an intelligent cause—it is more consoling to think that chance, or blind fate, is armed against us. An intelligent being promises no respite to our sufferings; if they proceed from *intention*, there is no knowing where they may end, and we must always connect the idea of guilt with them, for an intelligent being cannot be supposed to inflict sufferings without provocation; while the inflictions of chance are obviously arbitrary, and though they may excite in us a species of resentment at the indignity we suffer from mechanical unconscious causes, certainly justify us from all *responsibility* about it, and make us look to relief from causes as unexpected as those that produced our calamities.—There have

been unhappy people who have said, "I dare not thank the Deity for the few gleams of comfort I enjoy, for then I must also refer my sufferings to *him*, and they are by far the most numerous."

To think that God is angry with and punishes us, is a tremendous thought,—a thought that has driven the strongest minds to incurable madness,—to ascribe our distress to the physical operation of a necessary cause, arms us with a stubborn resolution, that knows little pain, and *no remorse*. Thus she was rapidly taking shelter in the enemy's camp. The garden, with its placid regular beauty, tortured her by its contrast to the agitation of her soul. A gate, at the extremity of it, opened into a wood; she hurried into that wood, its darkness was as light unto her, it seemed as a shelter from her own thoughts, and she fled to it with avidity. Nature, in all its rich and exhaustless luxuriance, has no-

thing to the eye or to the soul so delicious as the mild splendour of moonlight, shed over the darkness of a forest. There is darkness beneath for the unhappy to muse—there is light above for the happy to gaze on—and the trembling gleams between the branches give a strong image of life, chequered indeed with fitful and precarious lustre, but of which the predominant *image* is gloom—diversified, but essential.

Zaira wandered on; the beauty of the night, the mildness of the climate, precluded all apprehension from her wandering at this late hour. She found herself in a part of the wood where the thick-mingling branches excluded all light, but a tremulous and chequered gleam, that appeared and disappeared among the foliage above, as it was agitated slightly by the breeze. Suddenly a figure appeared to her in the darkness; a white figure, as large as life. She started at first, but a moment af-

ter approached it ; just where it seemed to stand, the trees opened a little, and the moonlight fell strongly on it, producing a remarkable and solemn effect. It was a figure of Christ on the cross, which had been taken from a ruined church in the neighbourhood, and placed there by the peasantry. It was of wood, but it was well executed, and the light that fell on it at once concealed its defects, and magnified its expression. What an object for a mind in the state of Zaira's !—Accident, that had so often presented her with the most terrible omens, seemed in this to seek to make atonement. The image of the Saviour of the world hanging on the cross a sacrifice for mankind, surrounded by darkness, and concentrating and reflecting the light solely from his own figure, was an intuitive symbol of relief. She approached it, as she would the presence of a friend. The pale and dying countenance, the woe-bent head, the outspread arms, seemed to unite the

expression of suffering and protection—singular but intelligible combination. None can pity but those who have suffered. “He that suffered, being tempted, is able to succour those that are tempted.”

As Zaira gazed on this figure, it seemed to live, to speak to her. Texts of scripture rushed on her heart, as if whispered to it by the Deity. She appeared to hear these sounds issuing audibly from the lifeless lips of the figure—“Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest.” She obeyed the call thus echoed from the bottom of her heart; she prostrated herself before the cross. Her spirit was bowed down along with her body, as she exclaimed, “Oh, my God! accept a heart that has wandered, but longs to return to its Saviour. Purify it, regenerate it, fill it with the love of you alone. Had it known no other but yours, it had never been almost broken. Let your Spirit descend on it, and aid me to struggle with

that image, for which all its pulses have beat, which has been wrapt in its very core. You alone are worthy of that place, which a mortal has too long usurped. Vindicate it for yourself, and set me free. Deliver me into the glorious liberty of the children of God, unconscious of any presence, incapable of admitting any image, but your's; dead to the world, and absorbed in God alone."

But though she uttered these words, it seemed as if some inner winding of her treacherous heart was disclosed to her, where the image of Charles rested, and defied the power even of heaven to displace him. It seemed to her as if she dreaded lest her own prayers should be heard; and that if the Deity had that moment offered to efface that image for ever from her soul, to make it as the image of one she had never seen, or seen always with indifference, she would have shrunk from the offer, and implored any other infliction at his hands.

The discovery of this self-betraying duplicity, this treachery of the heart, at a moment when she believed herself all-sincere, flung her into an agony—she grovelled at the foot of the cross—she pressed her bosom to the cold earth, as if crushing her heart could change it—she inwardly petitioned the mercy of God, with groanings that cannot be uttered.—Alas! this paroxysm of feeling had nothing in alliance with that broken and contrite state of heart, which we are told God will not despise; it was the agony of those who love, not the “desire of such as be sorrowful.”—She had sought God in the whirlwind and the earthquake, but God was not there.

The exhaustion of her feelings by their own vehemence was the only relief she experienced. She waited prostrate on the ground for the answer of heaven—she waited for some dawning of light on her soul—some smile from the divine countenance—

some fluttering of the dove, as his wings, outspread in heaven, prepared to descend on her soul.—“ There was no voice, nor any that answered.”

It is not thus God is to be sought, or, perhaps, he only hides himself to teach us the necessity of absolute dependence, and ceaseless prayer. He is a God that waiteth to be gracious ; but he requires also that we should wait for him.

Zaira rose stupified, dried up, heart, and soul, and brain—something hostile, sullen, and indurated, bound up in the very core of her feelings. She felt as if she had been repulsed, spurned from the foot-stool of the Almighty. She retired slowly, gazing on the crucifix with the dry eye of despair ; her lips moved, and she uttered sounds that seemed to issue from them, almost without her being conscious of them. “ There is no mercy for me there,” said she, her eyes fixed on the cross ; “ those arms are ex-

tended to embrace all the world but me; that head was crowned with thorns not for me; not a drop of that blood ever streamed for me; I am excluded for ever; I have no love for God in my heart, or I never could have loved a mortal so well. Oh, my God!" she cried, bursting into an uncontrollable agony of tears; "oh, my God! forgive me. When I was happy I believed religion and love to be the same thing; I imagined that, in worshipping that perfect being, I was paying the most acceptable homage to my Creator; I looked on him as reflecting the image of Him who is love, and whose image ought to be reflected in his creatures. I have been deceived—I have been guilty, perhaps. My God, my God! accept a broken heart, and heal it."

Again she prostrated herself before the crucifix,—again, with tears that seemed to gush from her heart, with convulsions that almost threatened her existence, she imple-

red God to infuse a sentiment of peace into her heart. She was too anxious to pass immediately from one state of strong excitement to another. She knew that there must be gradations, preliminary steps, painful, but necessary to be trod, but she had not patience to tread them. She wished, from a devoted lover, to become a devoted religionist in a moment—it is not to be done *in a moment*. She could not do what no mortal can do, pass from the desperate frenzy of earthly love to the “passion of immortals.” She could not remain in the half-way-house of hopeful tranquillity, like Christiana, in the Pilgrim’s Progress, waiting at the Interpreter’s house for a guide. Dreadful state! when reason forbids the only resource which the human mind in these terrible vacillations imperiously demands.

She was too rational for superstition, the necessary intermediate stage in such a case.

with such a mind,—the stupifying opiate that was to procure slumber between the transition from one feverish state to another. Deserted by her earthly love, rejected, as she believed, by God, she stood for a moment reeling in body and mind, on the precipice between time and eternity. It was the Zorat arch, a hair-breadth's space, and hell beneath it. The evil power prevailed;—she turned away from the cross;—a burning rigour, like that of iron heated red-hot, seemed to pervade her whole frame. She felt as if she could sustain the horrors of penal eternity that moment. She could not long support this preternatural “harrowing up.” The mortal instrument was wound beyond its pitch and beyond its powers; the strings cracked in the effort. She fell to the ground;—she was found there the next morning by Delphine, who had quitted the house at an early hour in search of her, hearing from

her attendants she was not in her apartment. She was found stretched on the earth, drenched in her cold tears, colder than the dew that drenched her garments from head to foot. They bore her to her apartment, but for several days she was very ill, and even deranged. Her intellects (those intellects so powerful, so worshipped) were sunk below infancy, were as wild and weak as dotage. The struggle of religion and love was obviously predominant in the wanderings of her intellect. Strange and rich fragments might be picked up amid the burning ruin, as the conflagration of Corinth produced the extraordinary metalline amalgamation known by the name of Corinthian brass. She called for the cross, and Madame St Maur, who, since the return of the Bourbons, had become *une tres bonne Catholique*, enquired for a crucifix among the servants. One was produced. "Hold it near me," cried

Zaira ; "let the blood drop on me ;—one drop will purify my heart. They held it close to her, then she mistook the figure on the cross for that of De Courcy ;—she kissed in that agony of devotion which love produces when mingled with the sentiments of religion. It was frightful to see her ;—at one time she implored it to pray for her as the representative of Christ—at another she prayed to it as the image of De Courcy.

To this horrible depravation of the imagination a deep and sullen calm succeeded. Madame St Maur was with her constantly, but could scarce ever get a word from her. Her fever was gone, but her mind evidently was overclouded. One day that Madame St Maur was absent for a short time on a visit, she suddenly ordered her carriage, and desired to be conveyed back to her house in Paris. Her servants trembled while they obeyed her.

The next day Madame St Maur got a letter from her, written with a trembling hand, and in broken sentences ; part of it apologized for her abrupt flight. She said, " Do not be angry with me, Delphine, for flying from your sight ; the very feeling that rendered me incapable of bearing the sight of a friend, is a sufficient punishment for any offence. How altered I must be when the testimonies of your kindness are a torture I can no longer endure !—that Goin like feeling, that brand on the heart, deeper than on the forehead, separates me for ever from my species. A word of kindness stabs me more than the most cruel insult ; it is the most cruel of all insults. I ask myself, why am I thus capable of inspiring affection in every heart, but the only one in the world in which mine is bound up ? why am I mocked with offers of kindness from others ? Perhaps the bitterest ingredient in my cup is, that friend—

ship itself irritates me. I curse my own ingratitude, yet I cannot be grateful. When he left me, he took away the jewels of silver and of gold, and when I attempt to follow him, the waves close over me.

“ Had he left me one single source of feeling to substitute in the place of that of which he deprived me, I could have pardoned him ; but he has deprived my heart of all sensibility but that of pain. It is in vain I attempt to generate a sentiment of religion in my soul. I try in vain to penetrate the cause of the sufferings that oppress me. In my prosperity I never neglected the poor, or the unhappy ; but perhaps I did not act from that feeling of pure devotion to God which he requires ; perhaps it was only the gratification of my

own benevolence I sought. I have not the courage now to enquire into this.

* * * *

“ I may ultimately obtain some relief from assisting the unhappy ; it is the only thing that appears to lighten the burden of my heart at times. I visit the hospitals, I relieve all the poor I hear of. May not this at some period bring me nearer to God ?

“ Pray for me, Delphine,—alas, the prayers of the happy have little unction ! Pray, however, that I may be kept from despair. My portion must be religion, or”——

* * * *

Immediately on the receipt of this letter, Madame St Maur set out for Paris ; on

her arrival she found Zaira was out; she had gone to a convent at some little distance from Paris. She had at this time an idea of taking the veil, and she understood that this convent was remarkable for the strictness of its discipline and its manners. "So much the better," said Zaira to herself; "their deadening influence may in time still and compose me; I may grow a mechanical thing of habits and of duties; a being that performs its functions by the sound of a bell—a wreath hung on a grave to wither there."

She arrived at the convent—Over the gate was the inscription copied from the Port-Royal convent; on the outside of it—"Time is before thee;" on the inside—"Time is for ever behind thee." Zaira gazed on this long. The superior was engaged, and while waiting for her, she walked up and down a gallery leading to the chapel, (this motion pain had ren-

dered habitual to her;) an old nun came out of the choir, and stood observing her. There was a singular contrast between their figures; Zaira's, whose beauty was yet unfaded, but whose features had the expression of despair, and the old religieuse, in whose calm demeanour, and placid pallid aspect, there was not a trace of human feeling, or of human suffering. She stood a complete exemplar of the annihilating effect of monasticism—torpid, obtuse, self-contracted, self-sufficed, without malevolence or kindness, pleasure or pain, love or grief. Zaira, the beautiful, the intellectual Zaira, gazed on her with envy. “How long have you lived here?” said she.

“So long that I have lost every trace of my former existence.”

“Had you friends in the world?”

“I had, but they are dead.”

“While they lived, it must have given you pleasure to see them at the grate, or in the parlour?”

"It did at first, a little ; but as I lost my recollection of the world, they began to appear to me like strangers."

"Your life must then be very monotonous ?"

"So much the better ; that tranquillizes."

"Have you any books ?"

"None, but what are necessary for my duties. The superior, I have heard, has books ; I never enquired."

"In this deep retirement you must have cultivated some resources for which you have such leisure. Do you love music ?"

"Yes, in the choir."

"Has it no charms but in the choir ?"

"I have never tried. I believe I am pleased with the sound rather from habit than any thing else, for, except from the words, I should not know the difference between the *De Profundis* and the *Veni Creator Spiritus*."

"Are you fond of painting ?"

“ There is a very fine painting over the altar of the chapel, I have been told ; I don't know ; I am as well pleased with the wood-cuts in the life of St Francis Xavier.”

“ Have you never sought to employ your heart ? have you no favourites among the sisters ? have you no animal whom you caress ? when your affections overflow within your bosom, what vent, what mode of expression do you adopt ?”

The nun stared up in her face with an expression of such perfect apathy—such inaccessibility of heart ; her countenance said so plainly, “ What new language is this in which I am addressed ?” that Zaira felt in a moment she was answered.

“ Your time must be very much unoccupied,” said Zaira, pursuing this hopeless enquiry, for misery made her very inquisitive ; “ how do you employ your leisure ?”

“ Leisure ! my duties leave me very lit-

tle ; at the intervals, I pick lint for an hospital."

" You have nothing to love on earth ?"

" I seek to love God alone."

" That is right," said Zaira ; " but have you ever known happiness ?"

" I have attained peace," said the old nun, crossing herself—" Have you any other questions to ask ?"

" None," said Zaira. " I fear I have seen troublesome."

" Not at all," said the old nun. " I pray God to give you peace."

" Have you ever known happiness ?" said Zaira, vehemently.

" I have always known peace," said the nun.

At these words Zaira turned away ; tears of the bitterest anguish, mixed with pride, ran fast down her cheeks ; she had no witness of her agony ; the old nun had gone away. " Oh, my God !" she cried, " are these

beings, desecrated of their humanity *almost*—of the divinity of reason *at least*—the objects of your exclusive favour? Must we become “temples of the Holy Ghost” only by ceasing to become receptacles of a thinking spirit? Do you, indeed, require for your service such beings, in preference to intelligent souls that love knowledge, that have dared to penetrate the secrets of the intellectual world, and to extract from the cultivation of the arts a few flowers to scatter over the desert of life? Will you reject such because they have expanded the faculties you gave them? Does it please you that they should remain contracted and withered? Was that wonderful and admirable vessel, the soul—that “ship of Heaven!” constructed only to lie rotting on the spot where it was launched? Never to spread its sails on a voyage of discovery, to traverse the intellectual deep, and touch at the isles of light?”

She went away without seeing the superior ; this specimen of conventual life was enough for her. She tried to form a system for herself ; it was composed very much of austerities, penances, and painful acts of charity ; visiting the most loathsome states of disease ; viewing the naked deformity of poverty, more loathsome than disease ; holding herself down to the picture of the moral cancer of evil eating into the core of life, and melting the fair face of things into a featureless and festering mass of corruption.

This may be called the natural religion of the unhappy. The idea of atonement is indissolubly connected with that of suffering, of which we always suspect some unknown offence to be the cause, and thus we punish ourselves merely for being unhappy. An atonement must be made either *for us*, or *by us* ; and those who have not been taught to look to Calvary, or have

looked, and in their pride turned away, must construct a kind of substitute out of their own sufferings. To this she attempted to add a theology of her own ; it was more inquisitive, daring, and autocratic than catholicism ; more full of exterior forms, self-infliction, and "voluntary humility," than the reformed religion ; its speculative part verged very much toward Calvinism ; its outward towards popery ; for her imagination dictated even in religion, and it was gratified by combining the ambitious and exclusive theory of Calvin, (which may be said to establish a kind of religious aristocracy,) with the meretricious and attractive exterior of Catholicism.

Madame St Maur in vain tried to dissuade her from the rigours she imposed on herself, under the influence of her new habits. She went on with desperate and fruitless perseverance. When we become the objects of vengeance to ourselves, (and

such a state of mind has been,) there is no victim whom we punish with more severity. We can forgive any thing that has deceived us, sooner than our own hearts. She saw no company; admitted no friend but Madame St Maur; she never read; if her hand touched a book accidentally, she withdrew it as if a serpent stung her; music was the last thing she relinquished; as she placed, with her own hands, the covering on her harp, *never to be removed*, a few tears dropt from her eyes. So intense was the pain of her heart at this moment, that she did not wipe them away; she was not conscious that she wept. Those are very bitter tears which we forget to dry.

Cardonneau often and vainly applied for admittance now; he had overdone his own mischief; his purpose had

“O'erleapt itself; and fall'n on t'other side.”

He had sought to make her an atheist, and

he had driven her into the fearful extreme of misanthropical religion,—a religion all pains and penalties, all suffering here, and terror hereafter. Like the sorceress in the Old Testament, he had attempted to show his art, and call up the delusions that waited on his power; but a more potent spirit answered the invocation; and could he have beheld the present state of his victim, he would, like that sorceress, have “cried out for fear” at the apparition he had unwittingly raised. Of this man’s very name she felt an invincible horror; she had a secret feeling, that to Cardonneau’s system she must come at last; and this thought never occurred to her mind, without filling it with the most dreadful agitation. Like animals in a state of fascination, her mind seemed to approach this point with a velocity, the greater in proportion to the horror with which she contemplated it. Cardonneau was the object of her in-

vincible abhorrence ; she trembled when she heard his knock at the door, which she distinctly recognized from that of any other person ; she thought her servants never could deny her fast enough. It appeared as if excluding his person was a kind of protection against the infection of his system. She felt almost in the state of those who are said to have made a compact with the evil spirit, and who dread every moment his coming to claim the fulfilment of his bond—"Not yet, not yet," she repeated to herself, as Cardonneau reluctantly quitted her door—"my time is not yet come."

The time was coming sooner than she believed. One day she returned home earlier than usual ; there was a peculiar expression in her countenance that rivetted the attention of Madame St Maur in a moment ; there was less of grief, and more of resolution and calmness than usual ; but it

was that kind of resolution and calmness, to which Madame St Maur would have preferred the most frightful expression of passion.

"I can no longer," she said, in a deep, hollow, but firm tone,—“I can no longer support this existence—I cannot make myself religious—I cannot create the love of God in my soul—my heart is stone—my conscience is seared—the heaven above me is brass, and the earth beneath iron. I am cursed with a curse—not one being, divine or human, in the illimitable creation, can touch my heart with a sentiment of affection. It is in vain,” said she, answering Madame St Maur’s look of appeal; “it is in vain—I have made the experiment with all the powers of my nature—I have grown to the pavement with my knees—I have clung to the cross with the arms of my soul—not a beam of light has fallen on me—not a whisper of hope has reached

me. I am the unwatered fleece—I am a fountain sealed—I am the rock from which not even the arm of the prophet can bring one drop of water. I pray, and my words are all mechanical. I receive no answer even from my own heart. I read the Bible, and when I have done, I shut it as a book whose language has no meaning for me. I exhaust myself on works of charity, but they have no charms for me. I am glad when I have been the means of removing physical pain; but when mental sufferings are spoken of I shudder, from my incapacity, either to sympathise with or console them. I tremble at the blessings of their gratitude; they wish me health and long life—*long life*, I cannot support *that*. Their blessings are curses—I cannot support this existence. I cannot love God, and man will not love me. What have I to do with life any longer?—my last resource is near.”

She paused some time; but Madame St

Maur, who felt nothing but a wild sensation of terror, did not, and could not answer her.

“ Delphine,” said Zaira, “ my dear Delphine, I am happy in announcing to you, that your toils are nearly concluded. To watch the wanderings of a distracted spirit, is worse, perhaps, than to feel them. I dismiss you from your painful, horrible attendance. I call to you confidently, as a traveller does to a guide of whom he has need no longer. You may lay down your torch, I cannot see by its light ; the rest of my journey must be past in darkness. I have to travel the valley of the shadow of death ; that is a path that must be trod alone.”

She paused again—Madame St Maur’s vague look spoke distress, but not intelligence.

“ I must die,” said Zaira ; “ Do you understand me now, Delphine ? I speak thus merely to save you and my friends the

task of vindicating my memory. I do not act from a rash impulse ; I am not mad ; no one need bring in their verdict, lunacy, (as they say in England ;) I am determined on dying,—while I retain my will and my reason, no one can pretend to controul me. I am sane and sensible, I will procure for myself the easiest means of death ; but if I am opposed, I cannot answer for my not having recourse to those horrible modes that will disfigure my body, leave an impeachment on my conscience, and the eternal burden on that of my friends, of having precipitated that which they could not prevent.”

Madame St Maur was no fit auditor for such a communication—her knowledge was confined to this life only, of which she was no bad judge, but she could not be an arbiter in the crisis of destiny—she could not hold the balance with a steady hand where suicide was weighed against despair ; her

hand trembled and dropt the scales on this emergency—she had lost the power of soothing Zaira; she never had the power of controuling her. In the struggle between her terrors and her affection, she fell into strong fits, and when she recovered, as a last resource, wrote to Viosmenil to come to Paris instantly to her assistance.

The generous sensible Viosmenil came, but all assistance was too late. Zaira had thought, and would think, for herself. She had shut herself up with some books; she did not tell what they were, but she read them incessantly. She scarce ever spoke to Viosmenil or Madame St Maur, but they read her terrible purpose in her face, characterized by the indelible lines of thoughtful despair—*Deliberata morte ferocior*. The tears of these generous friends burst forth involuntarily when they thought of this brilliant, benevolent, happy being, who had seemed more like a vision that ho-

vered in a poetic imagination, than a creature that walked this dry sterile earth of ours, who had never been seen but to dazzle, never spoke but to charm; this φιλομειδης Αφροδιτη, with tenfold the charms of the fabled cestus, so suddenly fallen into the sere, the yellow leaf,—so withered, irritable, inaccessible, repelling, paralyzed in mind, *effete* in heart. They spoke of her according to their different modes of feeling, (in which, however, there was a *concordia discors*.)

“ Oh, what a woman lost to society !” cried Delphine

“ Oh, what a noble creature lost to life !” said Viosmenil.

As they were speaking, Zaira entered, and instantly began to address Viosmenil on the subject that occupied her mind, as if its suggestions were uncontrollable, as if she was the organ of a spirit whose impulses she could not resist. “ I have been

astonished," said she, "at my own weakness. When one is determined on the greatest of all risks, it seems a miserable pusillanimity to deliberate on the means. Yet why should I conceal it? I wish to die by the easiest means, by means that will not convulse my frame, or destroy my reason; let life be as wretched as it may, such a death is very horrible. I would not terrify my friends in my last moments, or leave my image distorted on their memories. I wish to die calmly, in the full possession (if possible) of my faculties; their possession at that moment would be a consolation to me, though their consciousness now is an incessant torment. If I could discover such a means of death, I would die to-night."

The firmness of her voice in speaking these words left them little doubt of the strength of her resolution. Viosmenil eagerly grasped at the hope which this hesi-

tation about *the means* seemed to suggest. He spoke of a self-inflicted death being necessarily violent ; and even that, by the operation of laudanum, which is supposed the easiest, is often repelled by the constitution, and produces the severest sufferings without causing death. He observed also of suicides, that their features are known to retain, beside the traces of bodily agony, a peculiar expression of convulsive reluctance, of *posthumous repentance*, if it may be so called, that seemed to indicate a change of sentiment when all change was become fruitless. He added too, as a well-known fact, *that in the cases of those who had been prevented from meditated suicide, or recovered after the attempt, not one in one thousand had ever made it again.* He left this strong fact to sink into Zaira's mind without a comment.

That night she passed in the study of the classical authors, whom she supposed

likely to satisfy her mind by arguments, or confirm her resolution by examples of the step she meditated. There were enough of both to animate her to desperation. It was a singular spectacle—a human being on the verge of human existence is an awful object to its fellow-creatures—it is a sight so rarely witnessed, except by those whose feelings are paralyzed by grief, or callous from habit, that there have been persons who have sought to gratify their fearful curiosity by witnessing public executions, by seeing men brought to the brink of the grave without disease, or any of the ordinary means of death, and passing through the tremendous change in the presence of multitudes—multitudes who must partake that change with them in the stillness and darkness of the domestic chamber of death. Still more awful, certainly more interesting, is the spectacle of a being brought to that state by its own choice, and becoming itself

its own executioner, all personal sensibility annihilated, and the sufferers inflicting on themselves all they could have feared or shunned from the persecution of a mortal enemy. In Zaira's case there was every aggravation. Youth and beauty seem at perpetual war with death; they have not an image in common. Wealth seems to defy the vicissitudes of mortality, and to be always sufficient for its own enjoyment, as long as its duration is protracted; and genius, always eminent in time, and aspiring after eternity, appears to be still more independent of the transition. It has a power of assimilating itself to both worlds; it seems scarce a resident of earth while on earth; its communications are even here extended to futurity. Yet, in the possession of youth and beauty, and genius and affluence, Zaira sat meditating death, as if she was one to whom the want of all these accessories of existence had left no other alternative.

To the painter or the philosopher, to the lover of the picturesque or the terrible, her figure and employment that night presented a strange and fearful contrast. Her splendid apartment, her beauty, the books, containing all the wealth of antiquity, that were scattered round her, formed a singular opposition to the terrible purpose that filled her soul while she sat there. It seemed a kind of luxurious reception for death; a defiance of his terrors, like that which Juan, at his magnificent banquet, prepares for the spectre whom he expects to meet him there. She read long, but without any fixed ideas; she read rather to confirm her own sentiments, than to add to them; she was beyond argument, she sought for support.

The images of Cato, Brutus, and Portia, struck most on her imagination—they had not been hurried out of life by indirect or ignoble means—they had perished by their own hands, but not under the power of foul

and degraded passions—they might have been wrong, but they were not debased. Her imagination still prevailed, and she dwelt long on the death of Brutus, announced by a phantom, appearing with such mysterious solemnity in the shadowy darkness of the tent where the warlike philosopher sat studying alone at midnight ;—then she reverted to the death-scene, after the loss of Philippi—night—the scattered attendants—the rock against which he leaned—the sparkling sky at which he gazed—the apostrophe to virtue, containing perhaps too much reproach, but indicating complete independence of spirit in the midst of suffering, and on the verge of death ;—all this at once flattered her imagination and her pride ; it combined a false confidence in human power, with a delicious reminiscence of those objects of nature, that are not usually the accompaniments of a dying hour. She could have

died *there*. To carry an unabated resolution to the verge of eternity, has often been the lot of saints and martyrs; but it has seldom been their lot to expire under the glittering resplendency of a Grecian sky. The accompanying circumstances of their death are as stern and hard as the iron that tears their joints; but when our souls, in parting, reflect the lustre of the objects that surround us, and that are assimilated to their loftiest emotions; when we breathe our last amid the glories of nature, and enjoy them to the last, our triumph is complete; it is but passing with an exalted tread from one apartment of the creation to another more spacious.

She contemplated the deaths of Antony and Cleopatra; there was certainly something in the situation of the latter that interested her more than the fate of patriots and stoics. Cleopatra was a woman, to whose lips the cup of joy and of grief had

been alternately held, and who had been compelled to drain both to the dregs. She had been a queen, a beauty, and a genius, surrounded by all that is eminent or enviable; the mistress of successive masters of the world; yet she died by her own hand. Over this picture Zaira paused like him in Terence, who, meditating a crime, encourages himself by the example of a god. She had remained so long alone this evening, that Madame St Maur became terrified; she went and knocked softly at the door, scarce expecting the answer of a living voice.

Zaira answered in a voice whose calmness surprised her.

"May I enter? may M. de Viosmenil enter then?" said Madame St Maur, in a trembling voice, for she had an indistinct consciousness, that where Viosmenil was admitted, there could be no danger.

De Viosmenil, hardly waiting for per-

mission, glided in after her. "I see," said he, glancing at the books, "I see who have been your companions—What is their counsel?"

"To die!" said Zaira.

"And what encouragement do they give you?"

"The wretched need little encouragement to invite them to change their destiny."

"If they are sure the change will be beneficial."

"The best and wisest of antiquity thought so," said Zaira, in the false confidence of her late studies.

"They were not Christians," said Viosmenil.

"The Gospel does not forbid suicide," said Zaira, starting at this observation.

"The Gospel does not forbid either parricide or incest in words," said Viosmenil; "but it condemns them implicitly; it is

the glory of Christianity that it is not a code, but a spirit of laws."

Zaira was silent for some moments after these words; but it appeared from the expression of her features, that the spirit was too strong to be cast out by words. She made an immediate effort to pass to some other subject. The effort failed. A long silence followed. Viosmenil had sense enough to lead back to the subject, and urge her to exhaust her mind on it; though a Frenchman, *he merited to be an Englishman*. He felt with Shakespeare, "give sorrow words."

Madame St Maur and he sat with her till morning. They felt, or they hoped, that if they could get her over this dreadful night, all would be well, (just as if grief had any connection with time).

Zaira spoke as calmly that night as if she had sat it out only to entertain her friends. *They* were delighted to hear her speak;

Madame St Maur encouraged her from habit. Zaira's eloquence appeared to her like the repetition of some delightful music she had been long accustomed to hear. Viosmenil urged her to speak from a stronger feeling; he thought it less dangerous for a woman to speak than to act; but he was much struck, as she spoke, by the remarkable change in her expression, and still declares that its traces on his memory will be ineffaceable.

She seemed to have come from conversing with the dead—she had been sitting as it were on the verge of mortality, and asking the secrets of the future state—she had been grasping at the inhabitants of the invisible world, as they passed in shadowy array before her memory, and bidding them tell their name, as she wrestled with them in darkness. The strength of her intellectual power, combined with the intenseness of her feelings, all working with painful

toil to "double the stormy cape," and find out a new communication with undiscovered worlds—the severity of her purpose—had wrought so on her exterior, that the expression of her figure and countenance were changed as by the lapse of years. She was "settled and bent up;" the rigour of her frame, the breathless stillness of her features, her rayless and unmoving eyes, her hollow voice, speaking always in one key, made her appear already like one of those whom she hastened to be among.

Viosmenil had come to reason with her, if she was capable of reasoning; but, awed and overcome, he remained only to listen.

At intervals she said, "How little is known of futurity? For how many ages was man contented with his ignorance of another world, though always complaining of this? Antiquity supplies nothing but conjecture; conjecture pursued rather as the exercise of reason, or the sport of ima-

gination, than in the hope of useful and profitable discovery. The mythology of Homer is very barren ; he presents a train of gloomy phantoms, restless and dissatisfied ; but his ideas are encumbered by matter ; so, perhaps, are the ideas of all when turned to futurity. The purest of all theology mingles music * among the enjoyments of heaven. Virgil knew more than Homer : the march of the human mind in the path of knowledge had already begun ; yet how little more than Homer has he told ? His spirits in Elysium are merely mortals exempt from pain ; their pursuits and pleasures are all terrestrial ; his minstrels still sing, and his warriors exercise heroic games—

' Eadem sequitur cura reposita.'

There is no God there, whose presence con-

* Vide the Book of Revelation.

stitutes the beatitude of the departed, and but one shade of sentiment gives its delicious gloom to the picture—

‘ Hic quos datus amor crudeli tæbe peredisse
Secreti celant calles, et myrtea circum
Sylva tegit, curæ non ipsæ in morte relinquunt.’

Their philosophers knew as little as their poets ;—the *Somnium Scipionis* is beautiful, but not demonstrative. There is nothing satisfactory, nothing profound in their sentiments ; they say nothing, for the truth of which they would have died. The great Jewish legislator does not make a future state the basis of his system. Of the translation of Enoch, (which might have led to its introduction), he speaks in mysterious brevity, and without a comment. In the study of the human mind, we are perplexed with perpetual inconsistencies. The insensibility of death expressed by the followers

of Mahomet must be ascribed to their fixed belief of a future state of happiness ; and Bartholinus, ' De Causis Contemptæ Mortis,' attributes the fearless hardihood of the northern warriors to the same motive. Doubtless it was sufficiently powerful ; yet the Greeks and Romans owed their stoicism, their courage, and their magnanimity, to the very absence of this motive. The majority of them knew nothing of a future state ; they had no hope, indeed ; but they had also no fear. But, perhaps, a different creed was requisite for a rude band of military barbarians, and a polished and intelligent people. The Koran or the Edda would never have done for a Plato or a Tacitus. Thus, wherever I turn, all is darkness ; the darkness of scepticism, or the blindness of credulity. My feet stumble on the dark mountains ; I seem to wander among tombs that all bear the inscriptions put there by the living, but none of them containing intelligence from the dead. One effort,

the result of a single moment's resolution, will tell me more than mortal can ever know. Were this the presumption of curiosity; were it the vain temerity of an Empedocles, I would be very guilty; but it is grief—grief (to whom our submission is never voluntary) that compels me, and I hope God will forgive me. Doubtless, the Deity would not have left men for so many ages under a fatal error, when it could be so easily removed. The tranquillity with which the ancients shifted off the burthen of life, proves that man's natural conscience does not consider it a crime; they had laws against murder, and even against ingratitude, but none against suicide. This could not be because the criminal was already beyond their reach; for the punishment of a crime is often visited on the relatives and descendants of the guilty; it must have been that they did not consider it a crime. Their fearless independence of death strikes me as irresistibly

powerful over the imagination at least. They looked on life as something which they could lay down when they pleased. Thrassa dissuades his wife from suicide, *because their daughter would be left unprotected*. He does not threaten her with the wrath of the Deity ;—no terror waited on their dying hours. They considered death as they would any other natural evil ; talked of it with equal calmness, and encountered it with perhaps greater resolution, because its infliction was shorter. Death, of which Christianity, if it has not taught us terror, has certainly taught us cowardice, they viewed only as a certain refuge from suffering, as an honourable defiance of those *creditors of the heart* which it has no longer the means to pay. I envy them this recklessness ; I do not possess it. The national creed has

———' grown with my growth,
And strengthened with my strength.'

I cannot defy death as they have done, I loathe existence, but I dread futurity. We are weak, luxurious, and depraved beings; we are too much dependent on society and its artificial modes. What a sensation does suicide produce among us! If an instance of it occurs, the family (if of any consideration) are disgraced beyond the power of misfortune to disgrace them. Had the person been known to die the victim of the most profligate pursuits, the most loathsome vices,—had he died by inches in the sight of his agonizing family, in the hearts of whom the sight of his immedicable sufferings had sowed the seeds of their own deaths, all would have been well—the funeral would be conducted with due solemnity, and the eulogy of the departed properly declaimed by the survivors. But let that man be stated to have perished by his own hand, the scene is changed at once. We know nothing of his motives, but we

know them by charity implicit to have been very bad, such as shut him out from all sympathy but the shuddering sympathy of horror—such as condemn his family to shame and seclusion—such as leave on the act the doubtful construction, whether it was perpetrated under the pressure of distress or debt. Singular confusion of the causes of suffering arising from the present complicated state of society ! Thus we reduce to the same level, the internal feeling of the impossibility of supporting existence, and the external want of the physical means of its support. In the polished creed of artificial society, a broken heart, and the want of fifty louis', constitute a similar assignable cause for despair. The suicide is shuddered over, interred ;—we array ourselves for a ball, and wonder at his impatience of life. This is the case only with the higher classes ; beggars, it seems, may die with impunity. We hear of their death, and hope

they have been driven to suicide only from poverty and despair. This is a very perverted state of feeling. Christianity, by filling our minds with the terrors of futurity, drives us to a sophisticated anxiety for life, under all its evils, and on any terms. Life ! life is all we call for ; we swallow it, find every drop poison, and thirst for more.

“ There was nothing of this among the ancients. We exclaim against the cruelty of the Hindoos in exposing their infants to expire in baskets suspended from the trees ; at the Indians, for leaving their decrepit parents to perish in the woods by famine or by wild beasts ; at the Romans, for sending their sick slaves to perish in a desert island. But is there *cruelty* in all this ? Could the sick, the aged, and the mutilated be permitted to speak the language of nature to us, they would probably say,—We are wretched, we are helpless ! Our existence is loathsome to ourselves, and burthensome to you.

We stand before you an example of mortality, and yet the disgust and weariness which we inspire, deprives you of the benefit of the lesson,—‘ Deliver us, and deliver yourselves ; our lingering existence is suffering to ourselves, and injury to you.—Death will obtain ease for both.’

“ Thus they would speak, if they were allowed to speak as truth would urge them. Would we be injured if we listened to them, if we diminished the quantum of pain in life ? And shall we shrink to hear such language from ourselves, when our hearts imperatively utter it to us in a tone that will neither be resisted nor misunderstood ? I will not shrink, not another day—yes, one day more I will, Delphine, for I see you weep—and you weep too, M. De Viosmenil—cease—the tears of a man overcome me. *He wept*—I have seen his tears ; but he wept to betray me to misery, and you weep to witness into what misery he has plunged me.

There is a great difference, but the sight of tears shed by men is horrible to me; I would rather live under the droppings of the Upas tree."

Madame St Maur and Viosmenil were astonished. From the moment of De Courcy's departure she had never mentioned his name—never alluded to him directly or indirectly; now she spoke of him—spoke plainly of him. They did not know *what* to make of it; but each argued internally according to their different conceptions. Madame St Maur imagined that Zaira was resolved on life, because she spoke of her lover; Viosmenil believed that the mention of his name could be drawn from her heart only in its last agonies. Madame St Maur triumphed finally in the full pride of conviction, for as she was retiring, Zaira said to her, "If I could but once utter his name—if I could heave from the bottom of my heart the weight that lies there, I might feel relief. I will try to mingle his name

in my prayers, for I pray still," said she, grasping the hand of Delphine in hers, and enforcing the pressure to convince her of the truth of her assertion; "and perhaps God may grant me the grace to have his name the last I utter." Madame St Maur went away quite satisfied; she was sure that no woman who could pray for a man, was in the least danger of dying of a broken heart. She remembered the times of the League, when it was thus customary to mingle passion and devotion, and to have the portraits of the Virgin and the saints, in the margin of their illuminated missals, taken and coloured and arrayed after the originals of their lovers—so, Madame St Maur was contented after the manner of French women—And, moreover, she remembered Zaira's promise not to destroy herself that night; and Madame St Maur was a woman to be comforted with the mention of a night's interposition between

her and any calamity she dreaded—a night had a very long sound to her.

Zaira was now alone—it was very late—she felt exhausted—her eyes wandered over many books, and she felt that in many books there was weariness. She rested on the Bible, and accidentally opened on the thirty-second chapter of the prophetes of Ezekiel—that tremendous chapter, before the language of whose denunciatory vengeance, and unsparing desolation, all other menaces, national or individual, flit away, as the leaf before the gale, or as the small dust of the balance. She read on, with feelings at first stupified with terror, and then solemnized by the difference of the threatened desolation of the world, and the desolation of a single heart.—She read on, “Wail for the multitude of Egypt, and cast them down, her and the daughters of the famous nations * * * Whom dost thou pass in beauty?—Go down”—

Awful reply to all human pretensions struggling for exemption from mortality, whether for glory as a nation, or for eminence as an individual.—She read on, “ Assur is there, and all her company, * * all of them slain, fallen by the sword, whose graves are set in the sides of the pit ; and her company is round about her grave, all of *them* slain, fallen by the sword, *which* caused terror in the land of the living.—There is Elam, and all her multitude round about her grave, &c. &c. They have set her a bed in the midst of the slain, with all her multitude, &c. &c.—There is Meshech Tubal, and all her multitude, &c. &c. &c.—There is Edom, her kings, and all her princes, &c.—There be the princes of the north all of them, and all the Zidonians which are gone down with the slain, &c. &c. &c. Pharaoh shall see them, and shall be comforted over all his multitude, even Pharaoh, and all his army, slain by

the sword, saith the Lord God, for I have caused my terror in the land of the living." Zaira read these tremendous words—words ill suited to the present state of her mind. "*There* is all that is great on earth," she cried, "and shall I hesitate to follow? Mighty nations are there, and shall I, an individual, tremble to meet them? The heathen Elysium presents but a barren group; there is not one with whom I could hold society. The Christian heaven calls me to a brighter company; *there* are no sciolists—no warriors tilting in the dusk; there are the "spirits of just men made perfect"—there are those whom we loved and lost on earth, and shall I be there?" As she uttered these words, she felt such a sudden elation of spirits—such a rush of blood through her frame, that for a moment she was raised to a kind of supernatural madness. She looked round for some omen—some testimony of divine interference accordant to the tone of her

mind, and which it was sufficiently intoxicated almost to demand. She remembered (for though her imagination was inebriated, her intellects were unimpaired)—she remembered the extraordinary tale told by Lord Herbert of Cherbury of himself.

When he had finished his deistical work, he was so convinced of its truth, and so anxious for a testimony of the divine approbation, that he knelt down before an open window, and implored of God to give him some sensible sign that he approved of this work. He describes afterwards a sound wholly unearthly, something between music and the murmur of the wind, entering his apartment, diffusing itself through it and gradually sinking away.

For a moment, Zaira almost expected such an omen as this. Before the moment had expired, a sound deep and mournful struck on her ear; it was evidently in the apartment. She paused; this incident restored her to recollection; she was not weak

enough to believe it supernatural. It was a string of her harp that had broken ; the omen ceased to affect her imagination, but it struck on her heart. The art that she had so loved and embellished, seemed to warn her by its dying, melancholy sound. It seemed to say, " Your hand will never touch these strings again ; take then farewell in this last vibration."—" Some say the genius thus cries, *come !*"

Then crowded on her mind the awful story of that night in Alexandria, when the sound of subterranean music and revelry, passing out towards *the enemy's camp*, was heard by those who were feasting with Antony and Cleopatra at their last banquet, reminding them terribly of the contrasted splendour of their former destiny, and the gloom of that which was approaching. Then followed the tremendous *Μεταβαίνουμεθα εν-τευθεν*, of the Jewish history, when God left them for ever ; when * *Ichabod* was pro-

i. e. The glory is departed.

nounced by the voice of the eternal Judge, and the glory of their hierarchy and their temple departed from them for ever.

“ I come then,” said Zaira ; “ my steps already tremble on the verge of mortality—but if they tremble it is not from fear. One recollection alone (which may perhaps survive beyond it,) makes them falter. My God ! may I in this last hour, when I need all your mercy for myself, may I dare to implore it for another ? His image lies at the bottom of my heart. Alas ! I feel at this moment that only the influence of that name could suggest a prayer to me ; I want the power to utter one for myself !”

She sunk on her knees ; she buried her head in the sofa before which she knelt ; her arms were flung desperately over her head ; her figure was prostrated almost on the ground. She tried to raise her heart to God ; her heart returned the thrilling answer, “ You will soon know all.” She re-

mained long in this attitude ; she knew not how long.

Something that was not sleep came over her as she lay thus. It certainly was not sleep ; her faculties were not suspended. A still, but conscious sensation, pervaded her ; a dull twilight gathered round her. It broke, and the day of judgment glared on her trance. It seemed like a dream, but it was reality to the sufferer.

She started from sleep, as she imagined, and saw the heavens on fire, and the earth passing away as a scroll. Myriads on myriads of human beings glanced and disappeared before her, like bubbles sparkling and bursting in the dash of a cataract ; all hurrying on, on, on, as the tide of time bore its tribute to the ocean of eternity. Earth was gone, there was no place to stand on, nothing to look up to ; above, below, around, all was darkness illimitable, intangible, unsubstantial,—an ocean, whose dark waves

dashed against nothing. Suddenly a flash of lightning burst on the gloom ; a flash that appeared to tear open heaven up to the throne of God. She called on darkness to shelter her in vain ; she called on the mountains to fall on her, but the mountains were no more ; she grovelled to the centre in her spirit, but from the centre she beheld the Son of God coming in glory and in judgment. Millions, an infinity of millions, stood bright and shivering before him, as the blaze of His descending glory gleamed on their huddled shadows. Among millions I shall be concealed, she felt ; but the eye of the Judge was fixed on her alone ; the trumpet sounded, but its tone thundered in her ear alone ; the book was opened, but her name was on the page alone. None but a disembodied spirit could endure this agony ; she became insensible.

The dream changed its imagery ; she seemed to see creation as after judgment—

darkness and a wreck—desolation and nothingness—a land of shadows, where the light was as darkness—a place on which the Almighty had stretched out “the line of confusion, and the stones of emptiness.” There was no sun—a pallid and clouded gloom, like the spectre of departed light—there was no earth—the elements were confused and chaotic—masses of disorganized matter came dashing against each other, whirled along in a tide of ruin. Dark, formless, and void was every thing,—

————— “A wild abyss,
The womb of nature, and perhaps her grave.
————— The throne
Of Chaos, and his dark pavilion spread
Wide on the wasteful deep.” ———

She felt herself borne along in this whirl of nothingness; this tide without a wave and without a shore. Suddenly a light gleamed on her as she floated on. It came from an eminence, where stood a female

form, a well-remembered form, though seen but once before, and then also in a dream; the pale calm countenance had lost its mortal expression. The figure leaned on a luminous cross, from which the light emanated, and which bore a bright inscription—*EVANGELIUM*. She attempted to grasp it, but was borne away.

During this dream, her cries were so loud and incessant as to alarm Madame St Maur, who was in an adjoining room, and who had not yet retired to rest. She rushed to her apartment, and found her stretched on the floor in convulsions. The physicians who were sent for pronounced her life, or her reason, or both, in danger. Her state continued doubtful for many days; but grief, the only malady which makes the sufferer wish for death, is, of all others, the least mortal. She recovered, but to a state of miserable debility; she was forbid even to speak, an injunction she showed no wish to disobey. By the utmost submis-

sion to her medical attendants, she seemed to indicate a wish for life.

Madame St Maur communicated this observation to Viosmenil with great delight ; they drew different conclusions from it, however. Madame St Maur believed she was repelled from her purpose by the terrors of the vision. Viosmenil concluded she had some ulterior object, in which the image of De Courcy——

One night, while Madame St Maur sat by her bedside, she observed her lips moving as if they formed sounds which she had not strength to utter. Madame St Maur softly enquired if she wished for any thing ?

“ I am calculating,” said Zaira, in a faint but distinct voice,—“ I am calculating, if I live, how soon I may be able to reach Ireland.”

Madame St Maur, believing this to be raving, made no answer ; but the next morning, speechless with astonishment, she

heard Zaira calmly declare her resolution, the moment her health enabled her, to return to Ireland.

“ I am not superstitious,” said she, laying her cold hand on Madame St Maur’s ; “ the habits of my life would rather justify a contrary conclusion—nor do I feel that my intellects have been impaired by the blow that has crushed my heart—but a power, which I cannot resist, appears to summon me to this step—a voice calls me from this which I dare not disobey. Ever since that night,” she continued, lowering her voice, and a visible shudder agitating her frame, “ that form has never quitted me—it is standing beside me now. When you are near me, it shifts its place ; but it does not disappear. When you are gone, it returns, and stands before me. I know that form well, though I never saw it in life ; it is the form of that Irish girl for whom I was deserted. I was deserted soon myself. I see her form for ever ; it

bears no longer a hostile expression ; with gentle but solemn gesture, it wafts me home. The cross to which it points is fixed on the shore I remember well, the shore of Ireland ; there its light is shed, and there its light invites me. Something is to be done or suffered there ; what it is I know not, but I feel I am summoned there. There I drew my first breath, there I first beheld him, there perhaps"——

She was too much exhausted to continue the conversation ; but, some days afterwards, Madame St Maur, who had almost forgot the subject, was astonished at seeing Zaira's domestics making preparations for a journey. This phenomenon opened her eyes at once. Madame St Maur, with all her affection and good sense, was more liable to access through the channel of the senses than any other. She certainly never could have been forced by any evidence, but the evidence of her senses, to believe that one who might live in Paris would

voluntarily go to Dublin ; but the evidence was irresistible, Zaira's servants were packing her trunks in the hall.

She went with her astonishment and despair (as on all great emergencies she was wont) first to Viosmenil ; then, as her last resource, she went to argue the point, after the manner of Frenchwomen, with Zaira. The first expression of calm despair in Zaira's face awed and silenced her—she lost all her nationality in a moment, and became the candid, affectionate, intelligent being nature had formed her—she burst into tears, and this expression of feeling completely overcame Zaira.

“ Where are you going then ?” said Madame St Maur.

“ I am going to Ireland, my affectionate friend,” said Zaira, tenderly pressing her hands,—“ to Ireland, where my life and my misery both began, and where both, perhaps, are to be terminated. I feel that my destiny is to be fulfilled there ; it

will be better that I should perish by his hand, than by my own."

She saw the change in Madame St Maur's countenance at these ominous words, and she hastened to add, "My dear friend, my life is misery ; I am dying by inches, dying by despair. The cruellest enemy I have on earth would relent at the tortures I suffer, if he could behold them. The terrors of futurity have been disclosed to me, yet they in all their terrors struggle with his image in vain. It would be the greatest mercy I could experience, if he would plunge a knife into my heart this moment. I think I could draw out the blade, dyed in my heart's blood, and kiss it, if his hand placed it there. You know I have almost with a superstitious dread shrunk from mentioning his name. Could I have uttered it, it would have been heaving a mountain from my heart ; shut up there, it burned and preyed on my vitals. In addition to this feeling, which is consuming me in silence, another—a more

awful one, calls me to the last struggle of my varied life. I cannot express to you, Delphine, that secret sense which the unfortunate have, and by which they hold communication with the invisible world; they are so near the grave that they can hear and understand the language which no mortal but themselves can bear—I feel, but never can express that immortal intelligence.”

Madame St Maur would have reasoned, but she felt the effort useless; and she had that sense of the superiority of Zaira's intellectual character, which not even grief, sophistry, superstition, and misplaced passion, could ever diminish. She could only weep, and silently leave her to seek for consolation from Viosmenik, though she felt that even his masculine mind shrunk from encountering with Zaira's. Some days elapsed; the preparations went on silently, but certainly. Viosmenil and Madame St Maur only looked at each other as they be-

held them ; then they began to talk of the event as hourly probable ; and lastly, they felt some comfort in speaking of it, for whatever brings exalted minds to the level of lower ones, furnishes a kind of consolation to our perverted natures. They wondered, shrugged their shoulders, and acknowledged to each other tacitly, that Zaira, whom they had hitherto beheld as a superior being, was reduced completely to the level of mortality. Viosmenil and Madame St Maur were affectionate friends, but still they were human creatures ; they would have laid down their lives for Zaira, but they could not lay down their natures. As a last resource, the very night before her departure Viosmenil ventured to talk the language of the world ; he knew that Zaira had been a woman who cherished a keen sensibility of popular applause, and of the popular sentiment concerning her ; she was proud of the rare union of a spotless character and resplendent talents. Viosme-

nil spoke of this, and how much would be lost by this wild pursuit of a phantom of the imagination—by this spendthrift waste of all the treasures of existence at the feet a worthless boy, who trampled on them, and turned again to rend her. He said repeatedly, “What will the world think?”—an argument of mighty weight—talismanic words, of which the strongest spirits have at times felt the operation. Zaira was silent for some time; at last she said, “If misfortunes are made the subjects of reproach, what mortal can be free? Are those objects which nature points out to us as the centre of our affections, more likely to secure our happiness than the objects suggested by our hearts? As a wife, or a mother, might I not have been rendered as miserable by the cruelty, the neglect, or the errors of a husband or a child, as I have been by *him*? The only difference is, that in the one case, the cause of our sufferings is imposed by necessity, and in the other, by choice. This

difference is very immaterial to the sufferer — *we may cease to reproach our own hearts, when they cause us no more misery than is hourly inflicted by life.*"

These were the last words Madame St Maur and Viosmenil ever heard from Zaira. They wept at parting with her, but the near prospect of their own happiness assisted to dry their tears. They married, and, by aid of good sense, good tempers, much esteem for each other, some literary taste, and an easy fortune, they became such adepts in moral chemistry, as actually to extract comfort from life!!!

CHAPTER VIII.

——et Tyrios desertâ querere terrâ.

VIRGIL.

ZAIRA arrived in Ireland;—what a different arrival from her first, when, as De Courcy was accustomed to say, she made her *avatar* there! It was September when she landed; the fading light and shortening days were now congenial to her feelings, and as she sat on the deck, and viewed the shore through the dim twilight of a hazy evening, that made every thing appear pale, cold, and colourless, she felt as if she was approaching the shores of the “undiscovered country”—“the land of shadows,” where all things are forgotten.

She took a house at a little distance from Dublin, under an assumed name, saw no society, and never appeared in public. She was soon discovered, however, and the conductors of some charitable institution waited on her to intreat her to exert her talents at some concert or play that was to be performed for its benefit. This application appeared to give her great agony ;—she was unable, for a considerable time, to return an answer. At length she said,—“ I would assist those unhappy persons with the sacrifice of half my fortune sooner than appear in public again.” The persons who conducted the charity, distressed by the effect of their application, retired. She sent a liberal donation, and immediately changed her residence, to escape similar persecutions. Her life was very monotonous, but calm. There was a dull weight on her senses and her faculties, an obtuse sense of pain never very excruciating, but never for a moment remitting. She said to herself

perpetually,—“ It will soon be over, it will soon cease.” When we thus try to impose on ourselves, when we talk to ourselves as to another whom we try to pacify, the imposition is not more vain than it is melancholy. Still a sense of fatality, connected with her return to Ireland, operated at the bottom of her heart. She was like one of those in ancient times who is directed to visit an oracle, and who sits down before the doors of the temple till they unclose, and there, overcome by grief and weariness, falls asleep. She could have said, with Lee’s unfortunate hero, to the prophet Tiresias—

“ Therefore instruct us what remains to do,
Or suffer—for I feel a sleep like death
Upon me, and I long to be at rest.”

This state, which mentions *doing* and *suffering* in the same breath, and almost as the same thing, which expects no relief

from fortitude, passive or active, is a fine image of a mind broken down by grief.

* * * * *

She walked incessantly during the day; she said it was to deaden the sense of inward pain; perhaps it was because she hoped somewhere to meet De Courcy. She did see him sometimes; she saw his figure at a distance; she trod with frantic fondness where his shadow had passed, but when she approached him, the beating of her heart amounted almost to suffocation. She shuddered,—she paused; and shocked at this public exposure of her weakness, she was compelled to grasp the rails of a house for support till he was out of sight. It was singular enough, that, during this period, she bore the loathsome, horrible spectacles of mendicancy, misery, and vice, with which the streets of Dublin are almost putrid, with a kind of wretched patience almost

approaching to satisfaction. The sight of physical suffering is at once a balance and consolation to the victim of internal pain. Misery is certainly very misanthropic in its simple operations.

The beautiful buildings of the city, its bay, its mountains—she never looked on them now ;—she walked constantly through the streets—there was enough there to feed her mood. The perpetual spectacle of intoxication that occurred at every step, seemed to shock or terrify her no longer. Misery seeks misery every where, from the irresistible desire for comparison or analysis. When she saw these wretched objects raving or grovelling in the mire, she said,—“ Life is insupportable without some species of intoxication ; I wish I could share the delirium of those wretches, without their brutalizing degradation. The lowest class of life seeks physical intoxication to forget its miseries ; the higher seeks mental intoxication. The highest class of all tries

the desperate intoxication of the heart, irrecoverable and incurable; whose delirium is "sweet madness,"—whose waking is "despair."

Zaira's knowledge or memory worked with terrible perverted industry in aid of the false theory of predominant misery. Spencer, she thought, tells of the miserable inhabitants of Ireland in the reign of Elizabeth, that they take snuff to "beget fresh spirits." The inhabitants of the Isles of the South-Sea produce this excitation by gliding along the surf in their light canoes; and some writers tell us of a more savage people, who try to attain it by standing on their heads till they arrive at stupefaction. How enviable!—Such were the miserable wanderings of a mind broke from its moorings, and driving before that storm which perhaps no human mind can ride out without "tackle torn," inglorious, dismasted, and disarrayed. When she saw the crowds of beggars that pollute and infest the streets of the "beau-

tiful city," the same perverted feeling ministered fuel to the fire that was consuming her. Mendicity, she thought with herself, is always the concomitant of a certain religion—it abounds to loathsomeness in countries professedly Catholic—it is diminished in England under the influence of the established religion, and almost disappears under that of Presbyterianism in Scotland. To what is this vast increase or diminution of human misery, this fluctuation of the vast tide of calamity, to be ascribed?—Merely to climate, to a cause in which man has no share. The religion of the south of Europe is universally Catholic, that of the north generally Protestant; this must be purely physical. Well, then, the religion of men depends on their climate, and on their religion depends a large portion of their external comforts, of their human destiny, which is, doubtless, connected with their future and immortal one; and all this is brought about by their being natives of a

certain climate. Had I been born in another country, had other causes operated on my constitution and my feelings, what a different being might I have been !

Thus she strengthened herself in bad metaphysics, and worse sentiment. A singular contrast took place, (perceptibly to herself,) between her sensibility of objects that give pleasure, and of objects that give pain. She had formerly lived among every object that could exalt the mind, and delight the senses ; her heart favoured her creed of optimism ; her life was passed in a kind of refined and dignified voluptuousness. Now she sought out the spectacle of wretchedness every where with anxious and mischievous avidity. She left the fair mountain to batten on the moor.

On her arrival in Dublin the preceding spring, she had been much delighted by the picturesque situation and architectural beauty of the city. Now, her sentiments were changed, and her senses appeared

changed along with them; undoubtedly the music of the soul is most exquisite only when both are in harmony. A friend reminded her of the admiration with which the beauty of the city impressed her a few months before.

"Its beauty continues," said Zaira, "but it is the frightful lifeless beauty of a corpse; and the magnificent architecture of its public buildings seems like the skeleton of some gigantic frame, which the inhabiting spirit has deserted; like the vast structure of the bones of the Behemoth, which has ceased to live for ages, and around whose remains modern gazers fearfully creep and stare. We can bear the ruins of a city long deserted by human inhabitants, but it is awful to observe the inhabitants stealing from a city whose grandeur they can no longer support. Thus the Dauphin (father of Louis XVI.) saw with his dying eyes the furniture thrown from the windows into the court of the castle where he lay, from

the impatience of the attendants to quit it the moment he expired. I walk through the streets of this fine city—I pause at the gate of its superb university—I see a few sizars and porters lounging there—I ask where are the ‘illustrious men and ingenuous youths,’ whom the *eloquent patriot* greeted in other times?—Its ingenuous youth are all gone to Oxford, or Cambridge, and the day might be marked with a cretic note, when a gown with a gold, or even a silver tassel, is seen a *purpureus pannus* amid the beggary of its deserted walls.

“Opposite to it I behold a building which would have embellished Athens in the purest days of its architectural pride—It was the Senate-house of Ireland—It is now *the Bank*; and along those steps, worthy of a temple of Minerva or of Jupiter, the inhabitants of this impoverished city, without trade and without wealth, are crawling to pay bills; and among those

splendid passages which once echoed to the eloquence of a Flood, a Grattan, a Foster, and a Plunkett, is heard the jargon of runners and tellers ; and in that splendid apartment of the House of Peers still hung with the triumphs of William, the directors meet to ascertain dividends, and strike a bonus. I seek the residences of the nobility in this beautiful city ; they are easily pointed out ; their altered destination is enough to mark them. The palace of the Duke of Leinster (the only Duke in Ireland) belongs to the Dublin Academy ; the mansion of the Powerscourt family has become the station of the Stamp-office ; the residence of Lord Glerawly has been levelled for the erection of a catholic chapel ; that of the Cowper family has been purchased by the trustees of a charter-school ; and the splendid modern house of Lord Aldborough (built within twenty years) is become the seat of the seminary of Profes-

nor Feinagle. Woe to the land where the mansions of her nobility have become the receptacles of office, or the palaces of pedagogues !”

Whether these observations are just or not, it is certain they did not occur to Zaira on her former arrival in Dublin. With the Old Marquis in *Gil Blas*, perhaps, she was beginning to suspect that even the peaches of the latter time were degenerating. It is very terrible when grief, by destroying our sensibility, both of nature and art, deprives us of those auxiliaries against its power of which it has reduced us to the utmost need. It is like sending one to carry on war in a country which the enemy has already wasted with fire and sword before us.

One day she wandered to a very obscure part, called *Swift's-alley* ; there is a dissenting meeting-house there. The sight of it awoke many recollections in her mind ;—her heart grew full, and she paused in the

vain hope of being relieved by tears. An old woman who observed her, offered her a seat in her humble dwelling; she was involuntarily interested by that beautiful figure which could interest every heart but De Courcy's. She believed her ill. The poor, who know little but of physical sufferings, are apt to ascribe all signs of emotion to the one cause, they seldom suspect one of grief. Zaira accepted the offer; and with the remains of her former sweetness, made some inquiries about her hostess. She was a very old woman, nearly eighty years old, upwards of sixty of which had been passed in her present abode, a small building close to the meeting-house; she had a small pittance for keeping the keys of it, and seeing that it was cleansed and aired on the day of public worship. She had outlived her immediate relations, and perhaps forgotten her remote descendants; no one ever came to see her, nor did she perhaps wish for it, and her infirmities prevented her from

going abroad. Her room contained a chair, a bed, a table, Bunyan's Holy War, and a Bible. The latter she could no longer read, so that her habitation seemed as sterile as her existence. This hermitage, in a populous city, certainly presents a singular image. There have been persons who became enamoured of solitude, because it was embellished by the exquisite attractions of nature ; this, one may say, is a sensuality so refined as almost to approach intellectual pleasure. It is a glorified body, whose sensibilities are no longer physical or impure. But there was nothing of this kind here ; before, around, and above the dwelling of this woman, rose high and heavy walls of the darkest stone. The sun could so seldom shine on the narrow pavement before her door, that there was no verdure forcing its way between the stones—a few withered squalid blades of grass only, that seemed as if they had mistaken the place for a tombstone, there they grew like the forbidden

enjoyments of life, struggling for their abode in a heart devoted to religion. The building itself, the only object she saw throughout the day, had the rigidity of Calvinism in every feature of it; it stood there like the substantial image of an abstract religion, without grace or embellishment, imparting its own sternness to the heart and the manners.

Zaira thought of the decorative splendour of the churches on the continent; and she remembered the rebuke of Jesus to the Pharisee,—“ Mine head with oil thou did'st not anoint; thou gavest me no water,” &c. Would it not have been better if she had reflected,—“ He dwelleth not in temples made by hands.”——

“ Gorgeous—yet love I not this pomp of prayer,”

says one of our first poets. Certainly in churches, architectural magnificence and luxurious embellishment are rather a sacri-

fice to the pride of man than to the glory of God, and the worshipper seems to come there rather to boast of what he has done for the Deity, than to shew what the Deity has done for him.

Zaira was withdrawn from her musings by the talking (for it could not be called conversation) of the old woman. "She had remembered better days," she said, "the days of famous preachers, long dead, when the meeting-house was so crowded, that there was not room for half that came to hear the Word of Life; when there was a talk about forty years ago of *enlarging it*," (and as she spoke she stretched out her withered arms, as if the idea was too vast for her mind, unless she relieved it by a corresponding gesture.)—"Now," she said, "things are very different." And to hear her, one would imagine that the salvation of all mankind were dependent on the fullness of the congregation at an obscure meeting-house in Dublin. In her mind,

a member of that meeting, and a Christian, were evidently synonymous terms, and inseparable ideas. Zaira enquired a little further, and learned, that at the time when the meeting was so much crowded, her fees had been very considerable. "But people have all left off going the right way," said the old woman. This was a wretched discovery; it is horrid to find littleness of soul in the dying, or in those who make religious pretensions, whom we nearly identify with the former. They both belong, in our minds, to another world.

This woman revived in Zaira's memory the idea of the old nun in the convent near Paris. There was the same sterility, vacancy, and uniformity in their characters. A person unacquainted with religious distinctions, would scarce have known one from the other; yet, in one respect, they were antipodes to each other—Catholicism and Calvinism placed an immeasurable distance between them. Had either heard of

the other, she would have considered her, as a being devoted to the devil and his angels, placed under the concentrated and unmitigable wrath of the Almighty for ever and ever. Singular mixture of inanity and ferocity in the same mind !

Zaira then recollected a door-keeper at one of the foreign theatres ; he was so old that he was called the patriarch, and highly amusing from the importance he attached to his situation. To hear him " magnify his office," one would think him an apostle, and that the duties of the drama were quite on a level with the duties of religion. He remembered the times of Senesino, Farinelli, Faustina, Cuzzoni, &c. ; and it was singular enough, that, in speaking of them, and of the crowded houses assembled to hear them, he used exactly the same language that the humble portress of Swift's Alley Meeting-house did, when recalling the departed glories of former days. Their sentences were constructed and expressed

exactly in the same style of deliberate enthusiasm. The interests of the stage and the preaching of the gospel made the only difference between them.

This coincidence, that might have suggested, to a mind more happily disposed, a useful speculation, operated very differently on Zaira's. She compared the different characters and situations, and she said to herself, "there is no difference, but that of habit." When she once entered on this subject, she sunk deeper and deeper, plunging amid billows that came

"Booming and lapping o'er her spiking head."

She imagined there must be rest at the bottom—it was the rest of a sunk wreck, over which a thousand storms have passed, and the ocean pours its waves in fathomless silence. She thought, and was worse for every thought that passed through her mind. There is an atrophy of the soul, as

well as of the body, and the mind where diseased can convert the most wholesome nutriment into actual poison.

That evening while pursuing her usual restless walk; (more like the wanderings of an "unlaid spirit," than the activity of a human being), she felt more misery than usual. She gave aghast to the miserable objects that obstructed her path in every direction; she felt for the first time that the action was quite mechanical, she had no pleasure from it now. This sensation increased her wretchedness greatly; she began to feel that she was losing the only feeling that made life supportable. How little she knew of the state of her heart at that moment! It is said in Ulloa's Voyages, that, in the severest climate of North America, the spirits were frozen through the bottle—they were all ice; but the spirit retreating to the centre, formed a column of actual fire, that burned the lips that

tasted them. Zaira's heart was frozen thus; the external surface was hard and cold, but the centre contained one burning drop. De Courcy's image glowed there still more strongly from the intensity of the surrounding and encroaching cold.

She was now near Island-bridge, when a heavy shower drove her (rather from consideration for her servant than herself) to seek for shelter. She went into a small shop, where was a great appearance of neatness and industry. The frequent calls of customers, and the pleased assiduity of the shopkeeper, gave token that things were going on prosperously. In a back room his wife was instructing her children; and the eager, happy voice of childhood, proud of newly-acquired intelligence, sounded delightfully in the ear. It gave no pleasure to *her*—she trembled at the sight of happiness—she felt as Adam did, perhaps, when, on the evening of his expulsion from Paradise, he might have wandered near its bo-

loved limits, and drank the fragrance of its forbidden sweets, wafted to him by airs he must never breathe again; then looking up, saw the flaming sword of exclusion turning every way against him.

In a few moments, the officious, but not servile attentions of the man forced themselves on her notice. She did not recognise him, till at last, unable to struggle any longer with the fullness of his heart, he told her he was the person whom she had assisted with such generosity before she quitted Ireland; that her liberality had enabled him to recommence business, in which he was succeeding so well, that, as he said with Irish enthusiasm, "he believed there was a blessing on all she did."

At these words, which went too near her heart, she fixed her eyes on him with a look of such ghastly incredulity, that the man paused, fearful he had offended, though not understanding how. She was silent; and he resumed the subject in a lower voice.

He hoped that the young gentleman, who was the means of introducing him and his distress to her notice, was well and happy. This was too much. Zaira struggled in vain to answer him. The man then found out that something (he knew not what) was wrong, and became silent, "though it was pain and grief to him."

Zaira rose to depart, and then he could contain no longer; he followed her to the door with blessings and thanks, and continued them till she was out of sight. These blessings, these prayers for our happiness and long life, are terrible to those who feel life a curse, and happiness an impossibility. Language, black with execration and horror, would be less painful to them. She hurried on to escape the insult of gratitude, and she felt as if she was doomed to go on, like *Ladurlad*, with "a fire in her heart and a fire in her brain," condemned to do good without a share in it herself,—blessing, but unblessed.

Again compelled to stop by the violence of the weather, an autumnal storm of wind and rain, she took shelter in a cabin, and directed her servant to go forward, and send the carriage for her, that she might "return home." Home!—what a word for the unhappy to use—a place where they meet nothing but that desolate heart which they brought out with them. In a few minutes her attention was drawn to an obscure corner of the cabin by groans that issued from it at long intervals. It was so dark, that it was long before she discovered there what had been a bed, on which was stretched something squalid, haggard, spent, and moaning.

"It is a poor creature," said the woman who owned the cabin, "that came in here for a night's lodging—by times. I think she is only *half and half*, and she is not *expected* now, any how."

Zaira approached the bed; and to her inexpressible horror recognized in the sunk,

but wild features, the feeble; but singularly-modulated voice of the dying object, those of the mad woman whom she had thrice before encountered under circumstances so extraordinary. The woman appeared to recognize her too; she raised her hollow and livid looks to Zaira.

“ Oh, my eyes are dim!” said she, “ but I know you well—and are you come at last—come to hear the secret none knows but me—come to close the eyes of your ——”

And she stretched out her withered arms to Zaira. Zaira recoiled with an impulse she could not account for; she had never before thus shrunk from wretchedness and death. She was even hastening from the cabin, when the maniac, sitting up in her bed, called out to the woman to detain her.

“ Stop her!” she cried, in a voice hollow but piercing; “ bid her stop, if she would shun the curse of——”

"Of whom?" cried Zaira.

"Of her mother!" said the maniac, sinking back on her bed, and extending her clasped hands towards Zaira.

The latter approached the bed, trembling and subdued; her former recollections suggested the terrible possibility that this intelligence was true.

"Tell me," said the old woman, "are you not Irish by birth? Are you not the daughter of—of—, in the county of Fermanagh? And tell me the truth, for I am passing fast."

"I am," said Zaira.

"Then I am your mother—though when I saw you before I had not the power to tell you so."

"My mother!—and in this hovel, and in these rags—Oh, merciful Heaven!"

"Ay, Heaven is merciful, or I would not be spared to tell you even this."

"Oh, let me remove you from this wretched place."

“Hush!” said her mother, raising her withered hand; “what matters it to a soul going to judgment, whether it parts from straw or from down?—Listen to me. You had a child?”

“I had.”

“Well, that child is still alive, and I can tell you where.”

“Oh, speak, for God’s sake, speak!”

“Not a word—not another word to-night, if the world was kneeling there. To-night *I must make my soul,** and that’s enough for a parting sinner to have to do.”

No supplication, no adjuration of Zaira’s agony was powerful enough to extort another syllable from her mother, beyond the bare permission to see her the next evening, if she lived.

“Oh, you will, you must live!” said

* i. e. Perform my religious duties.

Zaira, as she quitted the hovel, in emotion unutterable.

To explain this interview, it will be necessary to lay before the reader, the letter which it was mentioned Zaira wrote to Madame St Maur, on her *first* arrival in Ireland, and which contained the particulars of her former life. After stating the agitation with which she revisited Ireland, the emotion with which she beheld the sea that bore her, and listened to the breeze that wafted her there ; she adds, "it is the privilege of poetry and of grief alike to invest inanimate things with consciousness. Joy, full of itself, needs no sympathy from external things. To the happy every day is bright. But grief, like superstition, makes even the physical creation populous, and converts every object into an agent of consolation or of reproach.

"When in the morning we came within sight of the bay,—when I got on deck, and saw the blue mountains of my country

bright on the left, and the bay, with its sweeping shores, and the city shrouded in the western mist, marking the horizon with its thin grey line, that trembled on the vapoury skirts of the morning,—when I felt what none but those who had left it long, and who perhaps return to find suffering not respited, but renewed, can feel, I clasped my hands on my heart ; I almost thought its beatings would betray me.—I tried to utter some prayers, but I felt that my lips moved without articulating. The ocean lay as calm around me as if it had never borne the weight of suffering on its waves. The joy of the passengers, the short technical answers of the sailors, and the still colder language of the captain, who answered every question as if the progress of the elements had never affected human happiness or suffering, made a strange contrast to all I felt. Strange indifference, that is produced by a constant intercourse with the most awful phenomena ! Thus, the more physical our existence is, the more

tranquillity it enjoys ; it is intellect alone that is always agitated, and almost always by pain. Singular awardment, whether it be the result of inconsistency or of deliberation—whether it proceed from an intelligent or unintelligent cause ! But from whatever source insensibility arises, how enviable does it seem to those who suffer ? Thus, those who witness the Falls of Niagara are stunned by a crash that seems capable of uprooting nature ; while those who dwell near it, deafened by the habitual roar, soon lose all impression ; and here alone, dear Delphine, have I courage to relate the events of my former life to you. We have the same dread to retrace misfortune that we have to expose a wound ; but we have more reason, for it is the wounds of the mind alone that are exempt from ever closing.

“ Even here, I hesitate to begin to tell what I have been. Misfortune always seems to females like disgrace. I am, what none of my continental friends but you

know, a native of Ireland.—I am the illegitimate daughter of a man of fortune in the west of Ireland, whose least error, perhaps, was his being the parent of a number of unfortunate nameless beings, none of whom he acknowledged or noticed but me. The singular beauty of my mother, I have heard, entitled me to this distinction. She possessed more influence over him than any other of his temporary favourites, and might have retained it but for a singular circumstance. Though she had sacrificed all that is valuable in the female character, she cherished a strong devotion for the catholic religion, perhaps with a view of palliating her other errors, and was so outraged by my father's avowed profession of the most daring infidelity, that even when I was an infant she declared she would rather see me perish than brought up under the roof of a monster, who defied both heaven and hell. After several attempts to take me from my father, whose fondness to me probably grew from opposition, she

was detected in one, and after a dreadful altercation, she was driven from the house, with an injunction never again to be seen in the neighbourhood. I have heard, that as the servants forced her out, she broke from them, and, kneeling in the hall, poured on my father and me a curse, the most solemn, bitter, and wild that ever passed the lips of a human being. On one of us, at least, it was fulfilled. Perhaps no curse could be more effectually accomplished than by my being left with the parent I was. He was a man of intellectual powers superior to most I have known, a "scholar, and a ripe one;" but he pressed every power he possessed into the service of obdurate scepticism. He called himself a philosophical unbeliever, but he did not disdain to borrow the aid of sophistry, invective, sneer, cavil;—all the light as well as heavy armed troops were at his service, and he had a full command of them all. His rage for converts was beyond that of the Pharisees; his scepticism had made

him miserable, and, perhaps, he thought to communicate misery was to lessen it; his genius and eloquence in the evil cause were indeed enough to draw after him the third part of the host.

“ My education, which, next to the dissemination of infidelity, was his principal object, was beyond what most women receive. I had teachers of every language, masters in every art, instructors in every science, and my father illustrating, condensing, and harmonizing every thing into one vast mass of intellectual discipline. I was taught to know every thing but the one thing needful; I was permitted to read every thing but the Bible. My father was not the fool who saith in his heart, ‘ There is no God;’ but he had so many objections against his power, goodness, or wisdom, drawn either from the physical constitution of things, or from the state of man, and his knowledge was so various, his reasoning powers so strong, and his resources so exhaustless, that those who encountered him

were soon unequal to the task, and, weary of defending the attributes of the Deity against endless objections, were contented to compromise for His existence, which was generally allowed them ; this, at least, was my case when I was permitted to reason with him. His wish to make me a prodigy in literature and the arts was rapidly fulfilling, as far as it could be fulfilled by a girl not fourteen. Singular and perverted ambition ! In depriving me of heaven, he wished to multiply my ties to earth ; and while he took away my birth-right, aggravated its value by the price he seemed anxious to give for it, as if one world could ever be a balance for the other. One dark cloud hung over me from the earliest period—one image haunted me from the commencement of my life,—it was that of my mother, whom the frightful tales of the servants still described as wandering about the house at night in stormy weather, and repeating her maledictions in a voice ‘ not

of this world.' Her disappearance, my total ignorance of her situation, or whether she was yet alive, and that terrible sensation so common in the imaginations of the Irish, of a being whom we believe not to be alive, yet know not to be dead—who holds a kind of hovering intermediate existence between both worlds, and combines the passions of human existence with the power of a spirit, all produced in me a species of indefinite feeling towards this awful being, that neither reason or change of situation has ever been able to remove.

“ The mythology of all countries has admitted and favoured the existence of such, from Thomas of Ercildoun to Wordsworth's Lucy Gray. Perhaps the cause of such wild imagery exists in the very nature of the human mind, and its unknown relation to futurity. We have never trod the confines of human existence with feet that felt the landmark ; of the boundaries of the fu-

ture world we know still less ; and we are therefore compelled to admit the existence of beings, whose state, partaking of both, can at least be arrayed in the images borrowed from one, while the rest of its shadowy existence fades away in the impermeable gloom of the other. Perhaps the loathsome superstition of the vampire, and our representation of Death by his physical form, both have this origin. Those who said they saw my unhappy mother, described her as wandering near the house in the stormy twilight of a winter's evening.—She was meagre, ragged, and bloody, and they gave dark hints of my father's passions.

“ Sometimes I have heard strange sounds under my window at night. Do not wonder at this superstition of infidelity ;—the widest extremes have been found to meet at last, as the Spaniards, in sailing round the globe, first expressed their wonder, when, after long pursuing what they thought

a direct course, it brought them to the point from which they had set out. The vacillations of the human mind are incessant, and the strongest impulse, given in a direction contrary to our natural one, only makes us return again with augmented velocity. The human mind may be said naturally to gravitate towards religion. But I was allowed no choice.

“ Among the talents which my father was most anxious to cultivate, and which nature developed earliest in me, were my extraordinary vocal powers and musical enthusiasm, which have been the cause of so much suffering, and so much celebrity to me. My father, liberal in every thing, was extravagant in the cultivation of this darling art, that may well be called ‘ the Poetry of the Sciences.’ The first teachers were engaged, at an enormous expense, to attend at his remote residence ; and among them was a young Italian, who had made a conspicuous *debut* on the foreign stages,

but whose voice, failing from disproportion-ate exertion, compelled him to adopt the profession of a teacher. Many things recommended him to my father ; his musical skill was profound : even Frederic of Prussia would have found him no less invincible than he did Mara. His *camera voce* was still delightful, though he could no longer fill theatres. He was well acquainted with the literature of his own country ; and, above all, he was an atheist, vehement and declamatory ; though, by a singular, but not inexplicable contrast, he always carried about him a portrait of the Virgin, and always crossed himself when he heard a peal of thunder ;—dreadful preceptor for a girl of fourteen to be consigned to, intoxicated with his delightful art, and incapable of being alarmed by his principles.

“ My father (oh, what a father !) left me for hours alone with this man, to listen to his brilliant and seductive picture of Italy, a land of palaces and flowers, a land where

the luxuries of art were combined with classic memorials; and the relaxation of manners was alike favourable to the indolence of literary enjoyment, and the silent felicities of the heart.

“ Let me hurry over this miserable period of my existence. We were married by a catholic priest, but our marriage was kept secret from my father; for though he professed himself master of a splendid patrimony in his native country, he still seemed fearful of my father's displeasure. After some time it was necessary to disclose it: I was about to become linked to society by more than one tie. Oh! that dreadful disclosure!—Fioretti quitted the house, and left me to make it alone. The undivided, unmitigated storm of my father's fury burst on me, and stunned me. He cursed me, he spurned me; and I have heard would have killed me, but for the interposition of the terrified but merciful, female servants, whom, however, he forced,

to bear me, still insensible, from his house, and from his sight for ever !

“ In his rage of malediction, he cursed me as a monster destitute of principle ; yet he had taught me none ; and had torn me when an infant from my knees, when he saw a domestic attempting to teach me to form a prayer. He cursed me for a wretch and fool, ignorant of the duties of life ; yet he had taught me, and his example justified his instructions, that to obey our passions was the only rule of human life. He cursed my disobedience as a child ; yet he had taught me, that the only tie between parent and child was a temporary convention formed by mutual interest, and dissoluble when that interest ceased to exist.

“ An old woman, in compassion, sheltered me in her wretched hovel (but I was insensible of its wretchedness) till my husband was apprized of my having now no other abode. He came ; and still I wonder how even youth and obstinate health

sustained my existence after that interview, which fully developed his motives and his character. After wasting hours in imprecations on me, whose bitterness was aggravated by the foreign language that used to be the vehicle of such different sentiments, till within the few last miserable hours, he left me, telling me, with a laugh more frightful than a curse, to be ready to accompany him in a few hours to the continent.

“ I had no preparation to make. We set out on our melancholy journey to Dublin. He was silent the whole time, and this was like a relief to me; for early wretchedness is jealous of imaginary consolation, while confirmed misery rejects even real. I tried to reason myself into excuses for his disappointment, for his temper, for the vehemence of his national character; I tried to hope that my submission, my helplessness, and perhaps the exertion of the talent that he had cultivated and admired,

might at some future time procure me his compassion, if not his affection. I had ceased to love him, but it is hard to disbelieve the only source of protection that humanity affords us. I even hoped that his child—his child!—Ah, Heaven! how much less would I have suffered, had I been its grave before I was its parent!

“ We arrived in Dublin; and he was expediting our departure, when I felt that to depart immediately was impossible; with difficulty I was allowed an attendant. My sufferings were very great; they gave me a great quantity of laudanum; I know not whether it is usual at such times, still less do I know what might have been its effect. I was insensible for many hours.

* * * *

“ I asked for my child; it was hours before I could obtain an answer; the women about me wept. At length my husband;

the father of my child, told me, I never should see it more. ‘Do you not think,’ said he, talking himself by passion into a justification of his unnatural crime, ‘that the incumbrance of a wife is sufficient? Must I have a screaming brat to remind me of my wretchedness every where?—You will never see it more—you must prepare yourself for another destiny.’

“I was insensible of all that he said afterwards. He had torn my child from me—a child from a mother of fifteen, dying to clasp to her heart a being almost like herself in helplessness and weakness. I would have forgiven him every thing—I would have worshipped him—I am unable to go on.

“A dismal light, like twilight, seemed to surround me for months—forms hovered around me, but I could not distinguish them—voices spoke to me, but I knew not what they meant—thoughts, too, were with me, of which I hardly comprehended the

depth or the darkness, but they suited my desperation—despair unenlightened by religion, unsustained by hope—they haunt me still—they have been with me in solitude and in crowds—you have witnessed them, and started at their effect, when even I believed I had forgotten them—forget them—yes, I might, I would—but they never forget me.

“ No one heeded me, no one comforted me ; and perhaps to this I owe my life and reason—the torturing of officious consolation would have irritated me to madness—I never had a gleam of recollection till the bright sun of Italy glared on me like unwelcome light on a feverish sleeper, waking him to pain. I was not allowed a long respite—I wondered, knowing my husband’s hatred, that he had not killed me, (*it is easy to crush a flower in the bud,*)—it would have been so easy, for I could have made no resistance, and would have expressed no

reluctance. I did not know *then* how much *his interest was connected with my existence.*

“ We were now in Italy. He watched me, not with the interest of affection, not with the feeling of humanity, not even with the naked instinct of compassion, but with the hungry cupidity of avarice. He seized almost the first moment of my recovered reason to inform me, that his only object in bringing me there was to compel me to exhibit my musical talents publicly, or, in plainer language, to go on the stage.

* * * *

“ At times I feel it impossible to proceed—Such degradation, such misery ! I have before said, a woman always feels a tale of shame like a tale of guilt.

* * * *

“ The first night of my public appear-

ance seems to me like a dream—I went on the stage in a state of absolute stupefaction—the lights, the crowd, my terrors, my former sufferings, the appalling novelty of my situation, bewildered me. I moved in a kind of dazzling mist—the exertion of my powers was quite involuntary, and the enthusiastic applauses with which they were received, I returned with bursts of hysterical laughter. Habit, that never could reconcile me to my situation, reconciled me at last to its circumstances. Fioretti's avarice (the only passion he had) strongly excited by my success, prompted him to every measure that could ensure its lustre or its permanency. The study of my profession, both as a singer and actress, by occupying my time, began at length to occupy my mind. He easily discovered that my intelligence of the graces of the poetry I recited gave me an obvious advantage over his illiterate country-women. I was furnished with a library; the love of literature revived in

my heart ; that heart had no other object to love. My mornings were passed in study, and seclusion, and in the evenings Fioretti attended me to the theatre, and prevented, by his constant presence, the expression of that admiration which I was said to have excited. Thus, in the midst of the dissipated cities of the continent, I lived a life of almost vestal retirement. The monotonous simplicity of this mode of existence was singularly contrasted with the brilliant applauses that attended my public exertions. I have often felt when I heard them as if they were not addressed to me.

“ Fioretti died ; and though I could not feel unhappy, I felt desolate at his loss. It was then, that, for the first time, a hope trembled through my heart, that seemed to add a new pulse to its beatings,—a hope of communication with my father, perhaps with my child. Days after days have I passed writing on my knees, and bathed in tears letters that I hoped might touch his

heart, and tearing them because no language could supply me with words, submissive, piercing, and supplicating enough. I humbled myself even to the dust before him, and implored him to allow me to prostrate myself at his feet, if it were only to be spurned. Years passed on in these fruitless struggles; and, in the mean time, my public exertions were unremitting, for I felt I was acquiring a fortune and reputation that might one day be my child's. Oh, that child!—How have I sat hour after hour, trying to imagine its features, its growth, the tones of its voice, till my reason was almost lost from the intoxicating indulgence.

“This year I received a letter for the first time from my father; it told me that my child still lived, and that though he could not yet prevail on himself to forgive me, he would consent to see me before his death, and inform me of the name and situation of my child. He permitted me to come to

Ireland, on condition of my appearing still as a public character, concealing my birth and connexions, and never intruding into his presence till summoned by himself. I came—all conditions were easy to me—my child was still alive—I lingered for a month in a breathless hope of momentary intelligence; it came *last night*; my father died suddenly, without disclosing the name—the—I cannot go on. What have I now to do in this country? What have I to do in life? Even you, Delphine, cannot feel for me; you have never been a mother.”

* * * *

It was after the receipt of the letter alluded to, that Zaira had fainted on one of her earlier nights of meeting with De Courcy.

CHAPTER XI.

— hereby doth she evitate and shun

A thousand irreligious cursed hours,

Which such a marriage would have brought on her.

SHAKESPEARE.

THE shock of De Courcy's unexpected presence had produced on the exhausted frame of Eva every effect that might have been dreaded. She did not faint, but she became ghastly, rigid, and speechless. He was terrified out of his purpose; he forgot to speak of himself or his feelings. The hope on which his heart had fed since his leaving France, fled from it in a moment, and for ever. He bore her in his arms to the house—the withered flower that he had blasted. He could not stand the inquisition of the servants' eyes, (who, having li-

ved in this regular family for years, knew him as well as they knew their master,) and he dreaded still more encountering Mr or Mrs Wentworth. He remained at the door, to send in his enquiries after Miss Wentworth. The servants answered him briefly, Miss Wentworth was dangerously ill—much worse that evening—could not be worse. With what tremendous apathy persons who speak from habit announce intelligence that kills the listener! The message ended with,—Mr and Mrs Wentworth's compliments to the gentleman, and much obliged.

De Courcy rushed from the door, grinding the words between his teeth,—“Compliments—much obliged. They have little reason—the *gentleman*!—Oh, yes, I am a stranger. They do not me, though I stand as a lacquey at their doors—I deserve it all.” He went to his hotel, where the faithful Montgomery waited for him, and that night was passed in paroxysms of despair, and

and hope, and condemnation, and self-consolation. He cursed himself, then he prayed for Eva; execration and devotion trembled together on his lips. Montgomery stood by with his usual firm patience; he was at comparative ease for a moment, when De Courcy sat down to write. He wrote—tore the paper into a thousand pieces—trampled on the fragments—gnashed his teeth—stalked up and down the room—dashed himself beside the table, and wrote again.

Montgomery sat tranquilly, but his thoughts were not tranquil. He felt that he must yet witness many miserable, some dreadful scenes. The object before him, too, was irresistibly painful and interesting. He remembered De Courcy but the year before, the delight of every female eye, the admiration of all who beheld him. A sculptor could have added nothing to the perfection of his form; a painter would vainly have imitated its freshness and bloom. What a

figure was he now !—he had shrunk from his natural dimensions. He was literally a *perfect* skeleton. Sculptors and painters might as well have sought models among the bony, unbreathing inmates of a vault. The meagre arms tossed over the head, and wildly deranging the luxuriant hair—the white reeking forehead frightfully displayed—the light of the eye quenched for ever—a sepulchral glare alone visible there—the lips that once disclosed “persuasion sleeping among roses,” white, quivering, and churning the foam of madness.

“Good God !” said Montgomery, “is this the object that could turn a female brain, that has broke a female heart ?”

* * * *

It was near morning, when De Courcy finished his letter. He sat beside it—read it over and over again ; he shivered from head to foot—his teeth chattered audibly—

a blue, contracted look began to spread itself over his altered features.

“De Courcy,” said Montgomery, (and he repeated his name several times before the sound reached his ear),—“De Courcy, will you come to the fire? it is very late, and very cold.”

“I am on fire already—I am burning,” said De Courcy, while he trembled more and more, and the chattering of his teeth became frightfully audible, and his shaking hand could hold the pen no longer.

A long pause followed.

“Will you go to bed, De Courcy?” said the anxious Montgomery.

“Will you come to hell?” yelled De Courcy, and his grinding teeth, his shuddering figure, and Satanic glare of features, gave the horrible question an emphasis Montgomery shuddered to hear.

A few moments after, he flung himself, relaxed and insensible, on a sofa.

Montgomery, with the assistance of a ser-

vant, got him to bed ; but when he was laid there, he placed his hand on his heart, and raised his eyes to Montgomery with a look of such anguish, that the latter found it impossible to quit him. His lips moved, but he did not articulate. Montgomery bent low, and caught the words "Take it away." Imagining he might be encumbered by something, he opened his shirt-collar, and put his hand to his bosom—"Do you not feel it," said De Courcy ; "that burning cord that I feel?"

"There is nothing there," said Montgomery.

"I tell you there is," said De Courcy ; "and unless it is loosened, I cannot live."

"Live for Eva !" said Montgomery, risking every thing to pacify him.

At that name a faint smile trembled on his lips, and with this smile still lingering on them he fell asleep. Montgomery watched him, cautiously withdrew the light, and retired. He thought, as he glided away

on tiptoe, and with reverted eye, that De Courcy's features had a calmer, but more death-like look than he had yet beheld.

The morning revived his hopes—De Courcy was up and dressed before him. Montgomery did not venture to ask where he was going.

The servant who opened the door for him in Dominick-Street looked surprised, but carried up his name. Wentworth was not at home, and Mrs Wentworth deliberated long with herself, whether she would see him—whether she could even bear his sight. At length she conceived that by seeing him once, she might deliver Eva's dying moments from a repetition of these persecuting intrusions ; she felt it therefore her duty, and where duty impelled her she never hesitated long. She descended to the parlour where De Courcy was—no woman had ever less thought of making an impression by her appearance than Mrs Wentworth ; the plainness of her figure,

and the simplicity of her habits, had prevented such an image from ever visiting her thoughts; yet so it was that the dignity of silent grief, the sense of unmerited injury, the consciousness of rectitude, and the purity of religion, lent such an elevation to her figure and movements, that, as she entered, the humbled De Courcy sunk on his knees before her.

Mrs Wentworth's passions had naturally been very strong; the power of religion had kept them dormant for years, but had not extinguished them, and now the thoughts of Eva's dying state, and the sight of him who had so cruelly reduced her to it, made them blaze out with a violence proportioned to their long and forcible suppression—

“Her heart was not within her—the fire kindled, and she spake.”—“Lie there for ever,” said Mrs Wentworth, “till all mankind trample on you, as I could do this moment! It is fitting that your posture should be as ignominious as your nature is base. I

would not lend a finger to raise you. Rise, sir, however, and do not mock, with this show of humiliation, those whom you have humbled to the dust, on whose grey hairs you have laid a burthen that will bring them down with sorrow to the grave. Do not flatter yourself that this is repentance. No ; it is one of the delusions of your wild feelings, a kind of intoxication, like that into which you worked yourself, when you persuaded yourself you loved that unhappy girl ; and, fatally for her life and peace, persuaded her too well to love *you*. You saw youth and beauty, and you imagined you loved ; now you see death, and imagine you feel repentance. Were you worthy of feeling it, you never would have incurred it. No man that could have loved Eva would have left her to die. You are the victim of a perpetual inebriation of the mind. Oh, that you were the only victim !—There is nothing steady, manlike, honest, or honourable in your whole composition. I am con-

vinced you could not be consistent in the pursuit of a worthy object for an hour together ; and were *you* a being to be entrusted with the heart of a woman ? I would not entrust you with the life of a dog I valued. And now you weep ? oh what insulting hypocrisy ! Reserve your tears, sir, for some fair hand to dry them—some foreign singer—some painted harlot—no matter to me or her. She is dying, sir—my niece is dying ; your cruelty has killed her—your tears cannot save her.”

“ Oh, if you saw my heart ! ” said De Courcy, in a voice choaked by tears,

“ Your heart ! ” echoed Mrs Wentworth ; “ and you talk of hearts ? Oh, wretch, you have no heart ! I lose myself while I talk to you—I forget all female reserve—I forget the meekness that becomes the disciples of Christ. Rise, sir, and begone, I pray to the Lord that I may never, by encountering your sight, run a second risk of for-

getting what ought to be the feelings and the language of a Christian."

"I must not see her then?" said De Courcy, in a voice of anguish unutterable.

"See her!—Oh, few are the sands you have left in her glass, and would you shake them with your own hand?"

"Will not you suffer her to see this letter?" and he dropt it from his trembling hands.

"If you intrust it to me," said Mrs Wentworth, "I warn you before-hand, I will tear it into ten thousand atoms—Farewell, sir!"—And with compressed lips, and a stern bend of her figure, Mrs Wentworth motioned him to the door.

De Courcy remained motionless; but the pleading of his look and posture had no effect on her. She crossed the room, and took hold of the bell; De Courcy caught her arm. "Will you expose me to your servants, at your feet?" said he.

"I would expose you to all the world; were it in my power," answered Mrs Wentworth. Her hand was on the cord. De Courcy held it.

"Hear me for a moment—you, you who are a Christian, should your Saviour reject your petitions, as you have rejected mine, what would you do? Can any of us offend a fellow-creature as much as all of us have offended God?"

At these words Mrs Wentworth let go her hold; her features relaxed; she held out at length her slow, conceding hand.

"You have made an appeal I dare not resist. I will take your letter, on the condition that you instantly depart."

De Courcy obeyed; her firm eye, and steady voice, left him no alternative. Mrs Wentworth sat meditating long with the letter in her hand; her promise then occurred to her; *that* was sacred as an oath with her, she decided to show the letter to Eva when she was able to bear it; "yet,"

said Mrs Wentworth, " of what use can it be now ?" and while she said this, she wept bitterly.

Eva had never mentioned her momentary interview with De Courcy ; it was only an additional blow on a heart that could no longer feel, but could still suffer. It left her without power, even if she had the wish, to speak of it. But the servants, to whose care De Courcy had been compelled to leave her, mentioned it in the house. Wentworth and his wife knew of it ; in fact every one but Eva seemed to know of it. She never uttered his name, nor could it have appeared that they had met, but from a mixture of increased lassitude and agitation, dreadful to her aunt, who knew the cause, but not dreadful to the sufferer, who now viewed every thing in reference to eternity, and to whom nothing that appeared to hasten its approach could be unwelcome.

At intervals, and as she could bear it,

Mrs Wentworth read this letter. "It was in the bond," and Mrs Wentworth steadily fulfilled her obligation. The letter contained these words :—

"I should despair of seeking pardon of any woman but you, Eva, and even of you, but that you are a Christian. Your religion breathes nothing but mercy and forgiveness, it has infused its blessedness into you; it is to its spirit embodied in your frame that I address myself for pardon. Eva, your lips taught me the divine lesson, which I implore once more to hear from your lips. I have listened to it in delight and hope; I call on it now in despair; let it not fail me. The view of heaven was first revealed to me by you, it is united with your image; if you renounce me, I am forsaken by both, and for ever. Do not imagine this the wretched language of artificial despair. Mine is real. Could you see my withered figure, Eva, you would

not be incredulous. I know I am guilty—I plead no justification. But I know I am dying—and I feel I shall shortly need none. Those who tread on my grave, though they condemned me living, will not curse me when I am laid so low. I feel I have been a wretch, but no one has suffered more from my crimes than myself. I cannot bring myself, Eva, to utter an attempt at vindication to your pure ears; the very terms I must employ would be unintelligible to you; and if you even understood them, you would never accept them as palliatives.

“ Yet deign to remember at least my sex, my youth, my strong temptations, the contrast to which my feelings were exposed; all the seductions of the world on one side; beauty yielding to me, genius intoxicating me, life flattering me. And on the other side—But I grow guilty in my very justification. I will not say an-

other word, except to aggravate my guilt. I am guilty then; this is a plea you yourself have told me would avail with the Saviour of mankind, the friend of sinners. Shall it be unavailing with one who declares herself his faithful follower? I again repeat I am guilty; so guilty, that, if I appeared so much so in your eyes as I am in my own, I never could dare to supplicate your pardon. But mine was no crime of the heart. At eighteen years of age, and I am no more, what does a man know of his heart? His errors should be ascribed to his ignorance of life, to the intoxication of passion, to any thing but a source from which the crimes of the heart rarely flow.

“If my crime has been great, my expiation has been perfect. I have renounced the enchantress for ever—I have dashed her cup of abominations from my lip—I *never tasted it*—I return as pure in soul and frame as I left you. I am a wretch to speak thus of Zaira—she was generous, mild,

beautiful. You are not a woman who could be gratified by seeing your rival trampled on. No, wherever I turn myself, I feel I alone am guilty, and all others are innocent. I try to collect my last breath, like a dying wretch, for one strong supplication for pardon. I have nothing to plead but my utmost need of it. Man could not prostrate himself more before the Almighty; let him not kneel to a fellow-creature, and be rejected

“ I appeal to your creed, to that which constitutes the support of your own soul, as the only hope of mine. I implore you to admit me once more to your sight; if you are what you are described to me, that object will be a sufficient punishment to me; if you reject me, I must feel the terrible consolation that you never loved me.”

Several following lines Mrs Wentworth suppressed in reading; the language of despair and imprecation that filled them,

on the supposition of his being refused admission, harrowed Mrs Wentworth ; she spared Eva words that would have almost killed her with horror.

The last words were—" If my eyes are denied beholding you, I swear by —, they shall be closed by my own hand!— Shudder not, Eva, at the expression of my despair, while you disdain to listen to the feeling itself. This is affectation which you must be above. Remember, that if I perish, it is you who hold the cup to my lips, it is you who make me taste the bitterness of death ; you may yet snatch it away, and bid my *soul live*."

Mrs Wentworth would never have read this letter to her niece, had she not believed her beyond its influence ; perhaps she was mistaken. Eva was dreadfully agitated, but her exhausted frame prevented any indication of it ; she suffered internally, but she suffered the more.

It was some days before she collected herself enough to be able to speak on the subject, and nothing but the increasing distraction of De Courcy, who called every day, and every hour in the day, could have driven Mrs Wentworth to ask Eva for the answer to that frantic letter.

A faint gleam revisited Eva's pallid cheek and sunk eye at the mention of his name. She was silent for some time, and then said, with great difficulty, " I cannot write to him. The effort to speak of *him* seems to draw the last breath from my heart. I have struggled long (with what pain he knows not, I fear he never will know) to fix the image of my crucified Saviour there. He comes to contend with that image. Oh, with what agony of soul I have struggled to think only of Christ, and still the thought of *him* forced itself between ! I could not sustain this struggle long—Why does he dare to renew it ? If I could hold a pen, I would write to him—perhaps the intelli-

gence that I can hold one no longer may affect him. I wish"——

Her voice failed her, and Mrs Wentworth, imagining that she wanted something, asked her, with eager affection, "*What she wished?*"

"That he would suffer a wanderer to return to her God, and to die in peace," said Eva; "that is all. If he knew what an effect his presence had on me—if he knew that, while held to his heart, though almost insensible, I dared to wish for life again—that a guilty hope wandered through my veins—that *that* moment was enough to efface hours of suffering and of repentance—if he knew this, he would cease to add fuel to those flames that scorch without purifying. His letter has kindled a fire within me again. I wander in my prayers. A gleam of light had broke on my soul, and he has darkened it again. If it were possible that I could recover, that I could live, still it would be madness to listen to him."

But tell him, I am dying. No human power can save me. Let him forbear to distract my last moments—it is impossible for him to retard them.”

She was so much agitated in uttering these words, that Mrs Wentworth never again mentioned his name to her.

When she next saw De Courcy, she determined to summon all her resolution to deliver her solemn message, and bid him depart in peace. But though thus “settled and bent up,” her heart melted at the sight of his despair.

The spectacle of youth in despair is terrifying; it is like one of those frosts in spring, which cut off all the hope of the year.

Mrs Wentworth wept, but she refrained herself—repeated Eva’s words, and added some of her own. “Pray,” said she to the convulsed and gasping wretch,—“cry mightily to the Lord. Hasten to the foot of the cross, and lay your heart and your

sorrows before Him who perished there for the chief of sinners ; He is able to purify the one, and to remove the other ; He can wipe away tears from all eyes. To see her, to persecute her longer with unanswered letters, is impossible and useless. It is but a vain sacrifice to that earthly feeling to which you have already sacrificed too much. You sacrificed her life, you almost sacrificed her soul. Your image is the only object that still interposes between God and her. But you have also sacrificed yourself, and I cannot reproach you. I see your altered look, and I pity you, as much as I can pity the destroyer of my heart's only mortal blessing. I pray for you, De Courcy ; so does your dying victim. You meet no more on earth, but you may meet where your union will be eternal ; ' and your light affliction, which is but for a moment, will work for you a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.' Seek the inheritance which she is about to partake—the inheritance of saints

in light. She leaves you for ever here; but her example abides with you. She is gone too far to listen to any mortal voice that would recall her. Her's bids you arise and follow her. She treads the path that the blessed have trod—a path of suffering and of glory, bedewed with the tears of earth, but brightened with gleams of heaven—‘the redeemed shall walk there.’ By that path ‘the ransomed of the Lord shall return to Zion with songs, and everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.’”

CHAPTER XII.

The leech then said,
And he shook his head,
She never could health recover ;
Yet long in pain
Did the wretch remain,
Sorrowing for her lover.

LEWIS.

WHEN Mrs Wentworth returned to Eva, she found the physician with her. He drew her to the window, with that air of solemn and fruitless precaution by which the living tantalize death, to announce to her that Eva was much worse, so much that—he paused, with a look of grave concern—“Something,” he said, “had agitated her since his last visit.”

When he was gone, Eva beckoned to her aunt to approach the bed, which she had never quitted since the fatal night she met De Courcy. She came—then Eva drew De Courcy's letter from beneath her pillow, and, giving it to Mrs Wentworth, implored her to remove it from her sight for ever.

“Till that is removed,” said she, “I never can regain that small portion of peace for which I have laboured since he deserted me. Oh, how dreadful it is to detect deception in our hearts even on the verge of the grave! I had thought all was over. I refused to see him, and believed my victory complete; but I received his letter, and I am punished as I deserve for the self-pleasing treachery of my heart. Take it away; let all the memorials of my earthly frailty perish. God will not deign to share a divided heart with a mortal. Yet let me read it once more,” she added, as her aunt

took the letter ; “ it is the last look I shall cast behind me.”

She read it without much emotion, till she came to the passage, where he hints at the consolation he will derive from the thought that she never loved him—“Cruel,” she exclaimed, laying her hand on her throbbing heart, with a look of agonizing conviction—“Cruel!—Oh, let him do any thing but reproach me with the want of that feeling, whose excess has brought me to an early grave! What could I do more than die for him? Even she for whom I was deserted, might have trembled to give the proof, that I, deserted as I was, have given without a murmur.”

Sinking back on her bed as she spoke, she signified that she wished to be left alone. Mrs Wentworth understood the meaning of that look, and retired.

The next day the physician called. He felt her pulse. With the same solemn pre-

caution he took Mrs Wentworth to the window, and announced that his future visits would be unnecessary ; recommended that any thing she liked should be given her, and took his last leave.

As he went out of the room, Eva's dying eyes followed his departure ; then she turned to her aunt, and said tranquilly, " That man will never return—He will see me no more—Man gives me up."

Mrs Wentworth wept.

" Oh, weep not for me, my beloved friend !" said Eva. " Yes, friend let me call you ; for the state which I am fast approaching dissolves all relationship.—Friend of my soul, you who taught my feet the way of peace, do you weep to see me tread it in patience and in faith ? Oh, your tears are the only stumbling-blocks in my way ! Remove them. I have trod over *his*, and paused not, let me not encounter those drops which true affection

wrings from your heart, and I shall dread no other obstruction. I die in youth; but with what a hand of mercy has the tie that bound me to life been torn! Sooner or later the delusion of life must have been dispersed. Is it not better that it was removed before it destroyed *more than my life*? When I was smote, God in his wrath remembered mercy. When the agents in our seduction from the ways of God become the immediate punishers of our dereliction, it is impossible to mistake the lesson. Had I lived, what must have been my fate? I would have lived only for him—I would have loved every thing he loved—I would have been intoxicated with the world. Such would have been my fate. I still shudder at the thought. How different is the result! How different are God's ways from ours! In the whole range of his dispensations of mercy, what is so merciful, as that the hand that led me

astray was the hand that pushed me back from the precipice ! He was the author of the delusion, and he seems appointed by God to have dissolved it ; perhaps, because none but he could. Had any one else been the cause of misfortune to me, how little should I have regarded it ! He knew not the power of the feeling with which he inspired me. Had the whole world been armed against me, against the whole world I would have stood on his side alone. What could dissolve the spell ?—he. ‘ It was thou, my companion, my guide, my own familiar friend.’ Oh, none but he could have twined such a bond around my heart, and none but he could have rent it away ! I am convinced, so intoxicated was my heart, nothing but his desertion could have undeceived me. I am undeceived, and let me bless the hand that has taken only my mortal life as the price of my conviction.”

That evening, when Mrs Wentworth re-

turned to her, she found her still more composed; the removal of that letter seemed to have removed the last burthen from her heart. She had nothing more to give up. Earth had no part in her now. It was a lovely, glorious evening, in autumn; Eva's feeble eyes were fixed on the window; there was a rich dark blue in the horizon, that offered repose alike to the eye and mind. "All is mercy!" murmured Eva to herself. Mrs Wentworth heard her and paused. Eva gently waved her forward—"Yes, my dearest aunt, all things around me are ministers of mercy—my dying eyes close with delight amid this delicious scene. Autumn was always my favourite season. I count it a blessing from God that I die in autumn—its fading colours, its rich darkness, its shortened evenings, are congenial to my soul. Perhaps even in early youth I had a presentiment." She paused for a moment, and then wiping

away a few tears, said, "No, no, I am not thinking of him now."

Her dissolution was now obviously near; she rose no more from her bed, but her countenance became gradually more celestial; a faint but lovely tinge overspread the cheek it had long deserted; her eyes had a light beyond the brightness of mortality, they did "comfort and not burn." Her evangelical friends were much in her apartment; this is customary, and, when practicable from the state and habits of the invalid, is undoubtedly a solemn and edifying spectacle. But it had somewhat too much publicity for Eva. One night, after there had been prayers and hymn-singing in her room, and each departing, had solemnly wished her peace, she said to Mrs Wentworth, "*When I am dying*, do not let the preachers be about me; let me die in private; death is too solemn a thing for witnesses. They might, perhaps, press me

on some points, which I could not *then* answer clearly ; and the failure of my intellects, the natural decline of my strength, might be mistaken for ‘unsoundness in the faith.’ They are fond of proposing *tests* at such a time ; it is no time to answer nice questions ; one must enjoy their religion *then*, not define it. If my testimony could be offered up, I would offer it in the presence of the assembled world ; but God needs no such witness to his truth. The curtains of a death-bed should be closed—let mine be so, my dearest aunt. Shall I confess the truth to you ? I think there is something *too public* in the printed accounts of the deaths of evangelical persons. I do not wish to be surrounded by preachers and persons calling on me to witness the truth, when I have no longer a breath to heave in witness of it. Oh, no, there is something too theatrical in that—and I,” said Eva, wiping the drops from her stream-

ing forehead, and forcing a ghastly smile —“ *I have suffered too much by the theatre.*”

At these words, Wentworth, who was in the room, came forward. He could not bear that a *niece of his*, brought up in the very straitest sect of evangelical religion, should thus depart without leaving a memorable article for the obituary of an Evangelical Magazine. He had expected this, *at least*, from her. He had (unconsciously in his own mind) dramatized her whole dying scene, and made a valuable addition to the testimony of those who die in all the orthodoxy of genuine Calvinism.

“ My dear Eva,” said he, approaching her bed, and softening his voice to its softest tones, “ I trust that I am not to discover in your last words a failure from the faith, for which the saints are desired to contend earnestly, and to resist even unto blood. I trust that your approach to the

valley of the shadow of death does not darken your view of the *five points*, those immutable foundations on which the gospel rests, namely,"—and Wentworth began reckoning on his fingers—Mrs Wentworth in vain made signs to him—he went on as far as *Perseverance*, when Eva, lifting her wasted hand, he became involuntarily silent.

"My dear uncle," said the dying Christian ; "the language of man is as 'the dust of the balance' to me now. Reality, reality is dealing with me. I am on the verge of the grave, and all the wretched distinctions that have kept men at war for centuries seem to me as nothing. I know that 'salvation is of grace through faith,' and, knowing that, I am satisfied. Oh, my dear uncle, I am fast approaching that place where there is neither 'Jew or Greek, barbarian or Scythian, bondman or free, but Christ is all, and in all.' Speak

Q. 2

no more of points, which I cannot understand ; but feel with me that the religion of Christ is a religion of the soul—that its various denominations (which I have heard so often discussed, and with so little profit,) are of light avail, compared with its vital predominance over our hearts and lives. I call,” said she, collecting her hollow voice to utter the words strongly,—“ I call two awful witnesses to my appeal—the hour of death and the day of judgment—they are witnesses against all the souls that live. Oh, my dear, dear uncle, how will you stand their testimony ? You have heard much of the language of religion, but I fear you have yet to learn its power.” She paused ; for, dim as her eyes were hourly growing, she could see the tears running fast down Wentworth’s rugged cheeks. His wife led him from the room. The mercy of God visited him even at the seventh hour, and we are rejoiced to relate that the labourer is (though called so late) in expectation of receiving

the same reward as those who bore the burthen and heat of the day. Mrs Wentworth returned, to pass the night beside the bed of death. Eva said to her at intervals that night, "Do not let the weakness of my dying frame, or even the wanderings of my intellect, (if I should wander) induce you to think that God has deserted me, that I have not an anchor of the soul, sure and stedfast. The body may fail, the workings of the soul are invisible, but I feel that the everlasting arms are under me, though I may not always be able to express my feeling. Remember this, when I am no longer able to utter it; and let the thought that this was my declaration, while yet the power of speech remained, be your consolation." At another she said, "Death is a very different thing from what we read of in Evangelical Magazines. I have read of many who departed in triumph, who exclaimed continually, 'Why tarry the wheels of his chariot?' whose spirits were almost

glorified while yet in the flesh. I feel none of this—no ecstasy, no enthusiasm. Death is an awful thing ! how awful none but the dying can tell—I tremble, but I hope ; triumph becomes not a dying sinner, who casts herself with fearful confidence on the mercy of God. The waters of Jordan are cold to the foot of the passenger, but God will be with me there, and the waters shall be a wall on the right hand and on the left.” Towards morning she slept, and Mrs Wentworth approached nearer the bed, to watch her countenance ; she wished to accustom herself to the change produced by sleep so closely resembling that which must soon be produced by death. When she awoke, a female friend who had sat up along with Mrs Wentworth enquired how she found herself ? She answered, “ Perfectly calm.” It was explained, that the question referred to her bodily feelings ; her answer was given with more than usual strength of tone. “ I am so little accustomed to think of my

bodily feelings, that when I hear the inquiries of a friend, I can only conceive that they mean, 'how my soul is faring?'" A few moments after, she said to Mrs Wentworth, "I die a monument of the power of religion. What could the whole world do for me as I lie this moment? could it restore my withered youth, or heal my broken heart? could it suggest a single hope to brighten the dark road I am about to travel? Oh what a difference between the powers of this world, and the powers of the world to come! Men might pity me, but never could imagine that they are objects of pity to me. My feet stand on the threshold of the house of many mansions, and worlds could not bribe me to look back for a moment; and this the religion of Christ has done for me. Oh how little consolation could I derive at a moment like this from 'gay religions, full of pomp and gold'—from a religion that promised nothing but temporal power or splendour to

its professors—from any religion but that of the heart and of grief? Amid the darkness of my earthly prospects, the cross brightens by the contrast. I lie here a helpless dying wretch; the world views me, and passes by on the other side; but he, the divine Samaritan, had pity on me, and the wounds of my spirit are healed.”

In the course of the day, many friends came to see her; she was not able to speak to all, but her smile said much. Among the rest, Montgomery was admitted; he came to catch the mantle of the parting saint, and heal the despair of De Courcy by a touch of its folds. It was observed, that on his entrance she was slightly agitated; some recollections connected with his presence shook her soul in parting, but in a few moments her calmness was restored. She pressed his hand with a kind expression; she remembered how kind he had been to her. After a pause, she drew a ring from her finger, and gave it to him.

It had been the gift of De Courcy ; round a beautiful figure of Constance there was a French motto—*C'est dans les cœurs des femmes, qu'ils habitent les longs souvenirs*—“ Take this to him,” she said, “ and”—she turned aside, and wept for a moment. During the remainder of the day, she spoke no more ; but she expressed evident satisfaction when passages from the Bible were read to her. There are some, especially in the Old Testament, where the messengers of God, doubtless to accommodate themselves to human frailty, deign to borrow the language of earthly passion ; such as, “ I have loved thee with an everlasting love.” “ My beloved is mine, and I am his.” “ Thou art mine, I have called thee by name.” It was remarked, that she immediately signified her wish to hear passages in a different style ; perhaps there was a reason at the bottom of her heart for this. Towards night, she made a sign that the “ Pilgrim's Progress,” which lay on her bed, should be put

into her hand. The circulation of this extraordinary work among the religious of all Europe is well known ; and when the Spanish and Italian translators had expunged the name of *Giant Pope*, they had nothing to fear for its popularity. It was given to her, and, pointing out a page which she had folded down, she made a sign it should be read to her ; it was that sublime passage that describes the departure of some of the allegorical personages for the celestial city ; one is this, “ When the day that *He* must go hence was come, many accompanied him to the river side, into which as he went he said, ‘ Death, where is thy sting ?’ and as he went *down deeper*, he said, ‘ Grave, where is thy victory ?’—so he passed over, and all the trumpets sounded for him on the other side.” Another is this, (it contains the dying declaration of one of the pilgrims when about to cross the mystical Jordan ;) “ This river has been a terror to many ; yea, the thoughts of it also have often frighten-

ed me. Now, methinks, I stand easy ; my foot is fixed on that on which the feet of the priests that bare the ark of the covenant stood while Israel went over Jordan. The waters, indeed, are to the palate bitter, and to the stomach cold ; yet the thoughts of what I am going to, and of the conduct that waits for me on the other side, lie like a glowing coal at my heart. I see myself now at the end of my journey ; my toilsome days are ended ; I am going to see that head which was crowned with thorns, and that face that was spit on for me ; I have formerly lived by hearsay and faith, but now I go where I shall live by sight, and shall be with him in whose company I delight myself. I have loved to hear my Lord spoken of ; and wherever I have seen the print of his foot on the earth, there I have coveted to set my foot too. His voice to me has been most sweet, and his countenance I have more desired than they that

have most desired the light of the sun. * * * * * While he was thus in discourse, his countenance changed, his 'strong man bowed under him;' and after he had said, 'Take me, for I come unto thee,' he ceased to be seen of them. But glorious it was to see, how the open region was filled with horses and chariots, to welcome the pilgrims as they went up; and followed one another in at the beautiful gate of the city."

No one, even dying, need blush to listen to such words, mingled with those of Scripture. Eva testified her satisfaction on hearing them, and it pleased God shortly after to restore her speech, and along with it an extraordinary portion of strength. This is not uncommon even in the last extremity; she herself felt this unusual accession, it quickened all her senses, and she perceived the faint sound of infant voices, apparently in distress; she enquired what it was.

"The children," said Mrs Wentworth,

hesitatingly ; “ *your children*—the little orphans—they have been in the house day after day ; and now they cannot repress their tears, though I tried to calm them.”

“ And I forgot them,” said Eva, smiting her bosom with her wasted hand ; “ Oh, let them come in, dearest aunt, their sight will do me good. I can still see them, though my eyes are weaker and weaker. God has granted me strength for a moment. Oh, let me employ it for his glory ! My soul is as the chariots of Aminadab. Let them come in ; my dying voice may touch their young hearts.” They came, and at her own desire they surrounded the bed where she lay. There was the rare and touching spectacle of youth in its bud and youth blasted—of flowers, still fresh and vernal, blooming in bright contrast round the fairest of the field, withered and dying.

“ Come near me,” said Eva ; and the children wept at hearing her altered voice.

“ Come near me, and weep not ; my voice is feeble ; but may God grant it strength to penetrate your souls. I am dying—start not, dear children, you must die too. When as healthful as you are now, when death appeared as far from me as from any of you this moment, I spoke to you of death. You did not heed it then ;—behold it now, and believe it. I am dying. Oh, dear children, look at me ; there is not one of you that entered life with views like mine. I had wealth ; I had many distinctions that none of you can ever expect or will attain ; yet I leave them all, and leave them without a murmur. What is it that supports me ? The gospel of Christ, that alone. Oh, my dear children, love your God ; in his love alone will you find an equivalent for all *you* can ever lose in life ; for more, for all that *I* have lost. If the happiest lot in life awaited you, you must part with it ;—you must die, and then your only support will be what forms the strength of my soul

now. Oh, then, my dear children, love your God, look not to any other source for happiness; remember what must be your resource in death; remember what is mine. Mary," said she to the eldest girl,— "Mary, I am but a few years older than you—but two years. You are fourteen, and I am not yet sixteen; yet I cannot survive more than a few hours, and a long life is probably before you. Mary, let the sight of this dying bed never quit your memory. You are young, but your youth may be withered as soon as mine. *I did not expect*—my voice is failing. Dear children, love your God, and him *only*; had I done so, my last voice would not have addressed you from this bed so soon. It is the will of God that my life can no longer benefit you; but oh let the spectacle of my early death stand in the place of many lessons! May you feel my resignation, but for ever be strangers to my errors and my sufferings."

The poor children wept sore, and struggled to be each the foremost to kiss the dying hand of their benefactress. This action touched her heart ; she turned her eyes, bright with lambent glory, on her weeping relatives. "*I leave you,*" said she ; " but"— Her uncle and aunt understood the appeal ; they swallowed the tears that almost choked them, and exclaimed, "*God do so to us, and more also, if your last charge be not cherished by us like the apple of our eyes.*" Eva bowed her head faintly, and Mrs Wentworth led the children from the room. She returned soon, and found that two or three of her female friends were preparing to sing a hymn. They were very good women, but they certainly had expected something more from Eva. Those whose thoughts dwell much on a future state, are impelled, by a natural sentiment, to gather round a dying bed ; they almost expect to receive intelligence of the world of spirits

from one who is so near their confines. This is very pardonable ; they had been kind and faithful visitants in her long illness, and now they prepared to lift their voices, and hymn their departing companion to glory. If there was somewhat of a " form of godliness" in this, it must be allowed there was something of its " spirit" also. They sung a hymn which Eva herself had composed a little before her acquaintance with De Courcy. Its subject appears to be taken from a chapter in the Revelation.

I.

- There is a plain above the skies,
And there a glorious city stands ;
God is the builder of her walls,
Unwrought by art, unmade by hands.

II.

Salvation shines upon her gates,
In characters of pearly light ;
Her walls a pile of adamant,
Her streets a sea of jasper bright.

III.

And who are they who solemn move
In robes of light her ways among,
With crowns upon each halo'ed head,
And praises on each burning tongue?

IV.

Through toil and trouble sore who passed
On earth while wandering, those are they ;
But God hath cleansed the spotted robe,
And wiped th' unhallowed tear away.

V.

Of earthly joy their share was small,
Pain wrung the heart, want bow'd the head ;
Sorrow and sin and shame they knew,
And oft they wept, and oft they bled.

VI.

Yet through the power of sov'reign grace,
Redeem'd from sin, renew'd to God ;
They loved the truth that Jesus taught,
And triumph'd in the path he trod.

VII.

And who is He upon the mount,
Whose forehead bears the unutter'd name?
Round him his ransom'd people shout,
" 'Tis He—and worthy is the Lamb."

VIII.

And who is He upon the throne,
Whose glory angel-harpings tell?
His name is Spirit, Light, and Love,
'Tis God himself, th' unsearchable.

XI.

Blessed, oh city, are thy walls,
And blessed who inhabit them;
God is thy temple and thy light,
Thy name the New Jerusalem.

At the words

"Through toil and trouble sore who passed,"

Eva pressed her hand on her withered breast—this was the last expression of her mortal feeling—she listened to the rest with a countenance exquisitely calm. At the close of the hymn they sat down round the bed and watched her, each praying from her heart. Some of these whispered ejaculations reached her ear, they seemed to please her; the clock struck two, she heard it, and said, "There are no clocks in eter-

nity; here time serves to measure pain; we shall not need it there." Soon a great change took place in her countenance; her friends observed it, and looked on each other. That night the dying sufferer, almost sainted, seemed to have a foretaste of the blessedness that awaited her. Her reason wandered, but her heart was awake, wrapt in a glorious intensity; it was only by the varying illumination of her countenance they could guess at the state of her mind; for though her lips moved, she did not speak. She imagined herself one of the * women who visited the sepulchre, her spirit seemed to slumber in the hallowed cave; then her countenance became ineffably bright, as she appeared to converse with the angels who watched the body; then an expression of anxious dejection over-shadowed it, like that perhaps of Mary,

* Vide Crabbe's Tales, "The Mother."

when she cried, "I know not where they have laid him." Then all became bright, placid, and heavenly, as her returning spirit recognized her Lord, and heard the promise, "I ascend to my Father, and your Father, and my God, and your God."

During this solemn period her look was not disturbed or fearful, like those who die in delirium, but glorious and lovely; "her face was as it had been the face of an angel." Her friends were silent from awe, for they could not but feel that something extraordinary was passing in her mind. She lay still for about an hour, and then said to Mrs Wentworth, "Bring the candle nearer to me." It was brought. "Nearer still," said she.

"It is close to you, my love," said her trembling aunt.

"Then my sight is gone," said Eva, "for I cannot see it any longer. God is untwining the cord of life with a slow and merciful hand. First, my feet were unable to

bear me to his house—then my voice became unable to sound his praise—now my sight is no more—those that look out of the windows are darkened—soon the silver cord shall be loosed, and the golden bowl broken.” As she spoke her countenance changed.

“ God bless you ! Oh, God bless you ! ” cried her friends, gathering round her, and wringing their hands in the involuntary anguish of human affection. Eva attempted to return the blessing.

* * * * *

Near as she appeared to death, what an event was yet to occur ! Mrs Wentworth was summoned from her bed by repeated messages from a stranger, who implored to see her, who declared something of the utmost importance was to be communicated. Mrs Wentworth waved the servant away, and whispered it was impossible for her to

see any one at that moment. Another message came, more imploring and more imperative than the first; the stranger intimated, that it was possible Miss Wentworth's life might yet be saved, if this communication were listened to immediately.

Mrs Wentworth's heart smote her; by gentle imperceptible degrees she withdrew the supporting arm from beneath the sinking head of Eva, and glided down stairs. There was that confusion in the house which always occurs in a house of grief, (even if the household is as regular as Wentworth's.) One light burnt dimly in the parlour, and scarcely shewed a female figure, who was wrapt in a long pelisse and veil, and who sat still, apparently regardless of Mrs Wentworth's entrance.

Mrs Wentworth paused—she heard the audible sobs of the stranger—all grief appeared trifling now, compared to her own. “Why am I summoned,” said she, “at such an hour, and from such a scene?”

The stranger rose ; and then her noble, graceful figure, forced itself involuntarily on Mrs Wentworth's notice. It could have been no trifle that impressed her at such a moment.

" Is the person who is called Eva Wentworth still alive ?" said the stranger.

" I believe she may still live," said Mrs Wentworth, " but life is parting from her fast."

The stranger rushed past her with a sudden motion. Mrs Wentworth, alarmed, interposed, and asked by what right she broke into the chamber of death at such an hour ?

" I am her mother !" cried Zaira, in a voice trembling with agony, but still retaining its commanding tone ; and, flying past her, she was already on the stairs. Mrs Wentworth, stupified by grief and amazement, followed her, but, benumbed by her sufferings and fatigue, she followed but slowly. The female friends were closing

the eye-lids ; at this action the stranger recoiled for a moment, then dashing herself on the bed, she screamed in a voice that froze the blood, (while grasping one of the lifeless hands that lay on the quilt,)—
“ Cold—dead—Oh, God ! my child ! my child ! ”

CHAPTER XII.

Una restabat, quam toto corpore mater,
Tota veste tegens, unam minimumque relinque,

* * * * *

Dumque rogat, pro qua rogat—occidit.

OVID.

ZAIRA had gone the evening of that day to the wretched hovel where her mother lay. She went in a kind of delirium ; there was no connexion of persons and events, nothing that could realize her feelings ; she went, but knew not what she was to expect. When she entered the cabin, she was struck by the resolute, upright figure of the old woman, sitting up in her bed of rags, and still retaining shreds of that fantastical and terrific habit she was accustomed to wear.

There was about her a wild and fearful contrast of mental energy with the utmost wretchedness of physical nature. The moment the old woman saw her, she stiffened herself frightfully in her posture, beckoned to her with her bare, sallow arm ; and as she observed Zaira's reluctance to approach, a light came to her sunk but burning eyes; she darted their dying fires at Zaira, as if they would blast her if she disobeyed. A dying wretch, clothed in rags, a mendicant all her life and a maniac, in her bed, commanding a female, whose intellectual powers were almost without competition or parallel, was a singular spectacle. The old woman again waved her meagre arm, and again flashed her sunk and blasting eyes. Zaira approached and knelt, trembling, on the damp earth, beside the bed of straw.

“ Listen to me,” said the old woman ;
“ it is of little avail that you are my daughter ; you would as soon that I had not told

you that ; you come to me to hear about your own daughter."

" My daughter ! then my child was a daughter ?"

" She was—she was.—Don't come across me again. My head is not right any more than my heart, and if I am put out of my way, if once it begins to turn and to burn again, I will die, and then it all dies with me."

Zaira made a silent motion of attentive submission.

" There was a child, that the foreign villain you married took from you the minute it was born, and sent to your father ; he did not care whether it lived or died. Your father gave it to a woman he knew nothing about, except that she went about helping the poor, and teaching them her own religion, (but it was not the true one,) on the condition that he never saw or heard more of it or you."

“ My father !” said Zaira, breaking the injunction involuntarily. “ Oh, my poor cruel father !—and was he so pitiless to my infant ?—But he is dead.”

“ He is !” said the hag, her vindictive feelings giving a terrible strength to her faculties, and making her forgive interruption and every thing. “ Yes, *that he is*, dead, and gone to his long, terrible account. I remember *that*—I can stop for *that*—I could talk and hear of *that* day and night for evermore. He brought all his bastards into the house, after you left him to marry that foreign rogue, (he was of the true church, however, more’s the pity.) Well, where was I—oh !—they lived together like the devils in hell—they drank, and cursed, and fought by the hour—and one night they quarrelled in their drink, and one of the boys, his favourite, struck him, and the devil was strong in him ; he knocked his old father down, and dragged him by his grey hair to the head of the stairs ; and

when he was a-dragging of him, (your father,) along by the hair, the old man cried out, and he said, * ‘ Oh, drag me no further than the stairs, for there *I dragged my own father*, but no further.’ The cry of the father sobered the boy; he saw what he had done, and his father lying at the feet of him, and he ran back to the room, where there was a loaded piece, or something, I don’t † *mind* now what it was, and he shot himself through the head, cursing the hand that had struck his father. He was the father’s *darlint* (after you)—he heard the shot—and he never spoke a word more, but to say, ‘ that shot went through my heart, though he struck me.’ He never spoke more than that till he died. That was his end—ay, that was his end—and so I said it would be when he drove me from his

* Fact—in an Irish family.

† Mind, *i. e.* recollect.

house—and so I said when I was driven from that place, a beggar, and a vagabond, and a madwoman. I said it would be his end—and *it was*,” said the dying wretch ; her hagard features brightening with the long-reflected flames of her vengeance, “ *It was—that was his end.*”

Zaira, in the silent agony of her horror, paused long ; she dared not to enquire after her child. The beldame went on ; she seemed to have received a powerful stimulant from relating the horrible death of her betrayer.

“There he lies,” said she, glancing her hollow eyes to the side of her bed, as if she saw the soul there weltering in flames ; “and there let him lie.—I was telling you of your child—well—your father gave her up to that woman, but when he found she was breeding her up well, (in her own way, that was not the true way)—the pride of a gentleman came to his heart, and he settled

a load of money on her, if the woman would keep her, and he *get shut of her, quite entirely*, and for ever. Then the woman, (I forget her name,) she married a *black presbyterian*, some of what they call the *new light*; but they have no light at all but the light of hell-fire, which that it may be on them for ever and ever, Amen.—And then the madness was on me for years and years, and I thought to *make her soul*, however it went with mine. I had money, for I starved and begged, and starved and begged till I got more than those that gave it could tell; and my thought was to get her carried off to Spain, or some place, where she might live and die in the true faith,—Well, the money was ready, and the boys were ready that carried her off, and the ship was ready to take her away, and no more to be said or known of her—and least of all of the old madwoman. I don't know, a slip of a boy got her away from me; I

don't mind how it was now, my head was never right before, and it was never better since, but only worse betimes ; yet if I am a living woman, (which I *will* not be long), I saw that same boy beside you at Bray, and at the fire, the great fire where all the bells were ringing, and the bells in my head outringing them all."

" Good God ! you knew me then," said Zaira ; " and why, oh why, mother, did you not tell me that my child was still alive ?"

" I knew you, and I did not know you," said her mother ; " sometimes I thought, but when I *thought*, I grew madder than ever. What could I know of my own child, with her foreign name, and beautiful look ? Now that you look miserable, I know you better. Yet one night, the night of the fire—that fire seemed to give me some light. I knew you for a minute—I was on my knees to you, and the tall lad

beside you. If you did not know your own mother *from the heart*, can you blame the mother for not knowing her child ?”

The word “child” thrilled on the chords of Zaira’s heart ; some detached parts of the story, too, sickened her with unimaginable apprehensions ; “ But my child—my daughter—mother—speak to me—I can no longer speak,” cried Zaira.

“ Nor I either,” said the old woman, drawing up her feet into the bed with the horrible rigidity of death.

“ Her name—her name !” shrieked Zaira, bending over her.

“ Her name !” said the old woman ; “ oh they gave her no true name. They should have called her Mary, after the Virgin, or Teresa, or some holy name, after the blessed saints ; but they called her after some black, bitter Presbyterian. Her name is blotted from the book of life. They called her Eva Wentworth—some such thing—

no matter now. Bid them put some covering on my feet—I am deadly cold.”

* * * * *

Eva Wentworth—Madness was Zaira's refuge for some moments; she spun and twirled in agony on the narrow floor, and fell on it shrieking, “ I have murdered her, I have murdered my own child—my own child !”

It was too true; Eva was the child of Fioretti and Zaira, adopted at first from charity by Mrs Wentworth, and afterwards brought up as her niece. Zaira's altered name, and long residence on the continent, could not awaken any recollection of the wife of Fioretti in the mind of Mrs Wentworth, and her unfaded beauty never could suggest to the beholder that she was the mother of a child fifteen years of age. The only ray of light or hope that flashed on

the darkness of her soul was a wild belief that, by disclosing herself to her daughter, by prostrating herself before her, she might perhaps protract her life, might perhaps save it. Late as the hour was, she desired to be conveyed instantly to Wentworth's house, and came—too late.

• • • •

The interval between Eva's death and interment was passed by De Courcy in sullen and calm despair. He never spoke but to enquire when her funeral was to take place; and on the morning of it attired himself in mourning to attend it. Montgomery felt it would be useless to oppose him. They went together. When the coffin was brought into the aisle, and placed before the reading-desk, where the clergyman was about to read the awful chapter from the Epistle to the Corinthians, there

was a short pause—it was then very touching to remark the difference between the mute and solemn grief of her relatives and friends in the surrounding pews, and the wailing of the poor who filled the aisle, and wept aloud for their benefactress. But all feebler feelings were lost in the spectacle of Zaira and De Courcy, seated on each side of the coffin in silence. Zaira's face was covered by her veil, but De Courcy kept his eyes immoveably fixed on the plate, where he read for the last time the name of Eva Wentworth.

The lesson was concluded ; the attendants came forward to bear the coffin to the church-yard ; then Zaira and De Courcy rising, stood opposite to and recognised each other. They did not speak, nor, from the expression of their features, could it have been discovered that they had ever met before. In going out of the church, they again were close to each other for a

moment, but neither of them experienced the slightest sensation from the presence of the other. Singular meeting of two persons, who, a few months before, had felt that the existence of each depended on the other ! Thus, perhaps, spirits meet in a future state, in a cold, averted, shuddering state of recognition, when they see no longer with the eyes of the flesh. When the earth was heaped over the grave, and the black coaches slowly retired with the friends and relatives, De Courcy lingered behind the rest ; and when all were gone, he threw himself on the grave, and remained there for several hours. Montgomery stood beside him ; neither of them uttered a word ; when, at last, he suffered himself to be torn away, no entreaties could prevail on him to speak ; he never changed his posture, tasted food, or closed his eyes in sleep. It was obvious that this could not continue long.

On the evening of the second day, he said, in a voice hollow and painful, from long-suspended articulation, and approaching death, "You saw her in her last moments—was there no word of peace for me?"

"She sent you this ring," said Montgomery; "and"——

"Well!"

"She was then unable to speak," said Montgomery; "but her countenance expressed all you could wish."

De Courcy took the ring, and pressed it to his pale lips. Encouraged by the permission to speak to him, Montgomery pressed him to recline on the sofa, and try to get some rest. De Courcy lay down—slept—and awoke no more. As Montgomery beheld the calmness of his exquisite features, he "trusted his soul had gotten grace." He was interred near Eva, for Montgomery knew the wish of his heart,

though death had prevented his uttering it. On his grave-stone was this simple line :—

CHARLES DE COURCY,
Obiit Mense Novembris, anno Domini, 1814,
Ætatis suæ 19.

Perhaps the *date* of such inscriptions is as profound a lesson as was ever taught—the tomb-stones of the young are full of instruction.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE following spring, the Miss Longwoods, gay and happy, were escorted by youthful, titled bridegrooms into that very church. They entered it fluttering in bridal finery, and as they quitted it, their steps trod lightly on the graves of De Courcy and Eva.—Such is the condition of life.

* * * * *

Zaira still lives, and lives in Ireland. A spell seems to bind her to the death-place of her daughter and lover. Her talents are gone, at least they are no longer exerted; the *oracles* may still be there, but it is only the tempest of grief that now scatters their

leaves. Like Carathis in the vaults of Eblis, her hand is constantly pressed on her heart, in token of the fire that is burning there for ever ; and those who are near her, constantly hear her repeat, " My child—I have murdered my child !"

When great talents are combined with calamity, their union forms the *tenth wave* of human suffering—grief becomes inexhaustible from the unhappy fertility of genius, and the serpents that devour us, are generated out of our own vitals.

FINIS.

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